DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

THE TIMES

SATURDAY

September 12 2026 | thetimes.com | No 75136

S1

£4.50 £2.50 to subscribers
(based on a 7 Day Print and Digital Subscription)

Caitlin Moran
How I cured my lifelong anxiety

Why you should bin your supplements
By Dr Xand van Tulleken

Magazine

Workshy young need tough love, No 10 told

- **Milburn: Benefit claimants have duty to engage**
- **Cut welfare payments if they refuse, he says**

Steven Swinford Political Editor

Britain needs to take a "tough love" approach to young people who are on benefits by giving them greater employment support in exchange for a new "duty to engage", a government adviser has said.

Alan Milburn, a former Labour cabinet minister who is writing a review on youth unemployment, said the state should provide young people with more opportunities to stop them from being "consigned to a life on benefits".

However, in an interview with The Times, he said those on health and disability benefits who are capable of working — particularly those with conditions such as mild ADHD and anxiety — should face an "obligation" to take advantage of employment support.

He said that Britain should introduce a "backstop" like other welfare systems in Europe, which would ultimately see people's benefits reduced if they repeatedly fail to engage. It would be used as a "last resort" for those who are able to work rather than for those with "severe and enduring" disabilities.

The time has come to stop "pussyfooting around the issue", he said, because the current system was a "total state failure" and "morally indefensible".

"There's a deal. And the deal is that as the opportunities increase, so must the obligations because otherwise we will end up with a situation where more and more young people are consigned to a life on benefits.

"And young people have an obligation to engage with that. And I know that sounds like tough love. But tough love is what is needed here."

Milburn is writing a report into the nearly one million 16 to 24-year-olds who are not in employment, education or training, which will be published in the autumn.

Less than half of the benefit expenditure on those aged 16 to 24 has any work-related requirements.

The number of out of work young people who receive means-tested benefits with no requirement to engage with employment support had almost doubled from 160,000 in 2019 to 300,000 at the end of last year.

Nearly two-thirds of those aged between 16 and 24 who claim personal independence payments — a disability benefit that is not related to whether someone is in work — list ADHD, autism, anxiety or depression as the primary condition.

"At the moment what we're doing is basically saying to a near majority 'oh it's fine'," Milburn said. "It's the state at its worst. A total state failure. Obviously

Continued on page 2

TIM GRAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Debutante who charmed Charles

Davina Sheffield, the future king's girlfriend for two years during the Seventies and thought at one time to be his ideal match, has died aged 75 Obituary, page 79

Assisted dying bill defeated

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor

Assisted dying will not become legal in England and Wales after MPs threw out legislation that would have allowed the terminally ill to end their own life.

In a historic vote MPs rejected the bill by a majority of 16, despite having voted in favour of the legislation on two previous occasions. Supporters conceded that the issue was now unlikely to return to parliament for years to come and described it as a "tragic day".

Opponents of the bill had argued that it was "unsafe and unworkable".

Just a year ago MPs backed the same bill by 314 votes to 291 but yesterday they voted 286 to 270 against. The reversal was the result of more than 30 Labour MPs, who were previously supportive of assisted dying, staying away.

Andy Burnham, who did not vote, had insisted that MPs were free to vote with their conscience. However, he had made clear that, unlike his predecessor, Sir Keir Starmer, he was personally opposed to the move. He said it was not the "right time" and that palliative care must be "fixed" first.

The proposed law would have allowed adults with less than six months to live to apply to be given help to end their own life, subject to the approval of two doctors. Critics said it could have left vulnerable people open to being coerced into taking their own lives.

Dame Esther Rantzen, a leading supporter of the bill, said: "I am sure a change in the law will come. I am deeply sad that it won't come soon enough for many of the people who need it."

Those who spoke against the legislation in the Commons included Ashley Dalton, a former health minister who has terminal breast cancer.

'Quiet quitters' finish off bill, pages 6-7

9 771742 498264 37>

Today's highlights

7.35am **The Right Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin**, Bishop of Dover, on the recent anti-migrant protests

2.15pm **Priya Parker**, who advised Zohran Mamdani on his New York mayoral campaign

3.20pm The Gavin & Stacey actress **Joanna Page**, right

6.05pm **Lord Malloch-Brown**, former UN deputy secretary-general

11.35pm The author and journalist **Jon Ronson** on his new book, *The Castle*

DAB RADIO FREE APP 'PLAY TIMES RADIO'

TIMESRadio

The Times for our different times

The Times was named winner of the national website of the year at Press Gazette's Future of Media Awards 2026. Judges said the title had "rewritten the narrative of legacy media decline" through "innovation and a consistent focus on giving its audience a finishable, high-quality experience".

OFFER

thetimes.com is the website of The Times and The Sunday Times. Save up to 30% with a subscription now.

THETIMES.COM/SUBSCRIBE

TODAY'S EDITION

WEEKEND

FRESHER FACE
Caroline Quentin on why she's off to university at 66

PAGES 4-5

SATURDAY REVIEW

AGAINST TYPE
Rob Brydon's next chapter… as a children's author

COVER

SPORT

PARTY CRASHER
Rookie Razaullah gives Pakistan hope at Edgbaston

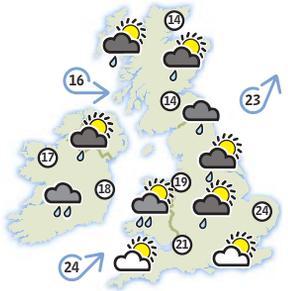
COVER

LETTERS 34
LEADING ARTICLES 35

WEEKEND ESSAY 38-39
MONEY 61

TELEVISION & RADIO
SATURDAY REVIEW

THE WEATHER



Some warms spells of sunshine but areas of cloud will bring rain across the country. **Full forecast, page 77**

If a section of your Times is missing, please call 020-7711 1525 or e-mail help@timesplus.co.uk and we will send it to you, subject to availability.

©TIMES MEDIA LIMITED, 2026.
Published in print and all other derivative formats by Times Media Ltd, 1 London Bridge St, London, SE1 9GF; telephone 020 7782 5000.
Printed by Newsprinters Holdings Ltd, Great Cambridge Rd, Waltham Cross, EN8 8DY; Kitling Rd, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 9HN; and Byramsmuir Road, Holytown, Motherwell, ML1 1NP.
Webprint, 2023 Bianconi Avenue, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin, Ireland. KP Services, La Rue Martel, La Rue des Pres Trading Estate, St Saviour, Jersey, JE2 7QR.
For permission to copy articles or headlines for internal information purposes contact NLA media access at copy@nla.co.uk; telephone 01892 525273.
For all other reproduction and licensing inquiries contact Licensing Department, 1 London Bridge St, London, SE1 9GF; telephone 020 7711 7888; email enquiries@newslicensing.co.uk.

Crypto billionaire donates a record £36m to Reform UK

Steven Swinford Political Editor

Nigel Farage's Reform UK has received a £36 million donation — the biggest in the history of British politics — from a cryptocurrency billionaire.

Ben Delo, who recently relocated from Hong Kong to the UK so he could continue giving money to the party, said he had made the donation because he wanted a "fair fight" in the polls.

Details of Delo's donation were given to The Daily Telegraph after Reform was approached by The Sunday Times about it yesterday.

He has already given Reform £4 million this year and said he wanted to give more money so the party could compete with the "entrenched advantages" of its rivals.

It follows a difficult summer for Farage, who is facing a police investigation into the funding of his party. The Metropolitan Police announced on Wednesday that it was opening a criminal inquiry into claims that senior party figures breached donation rules, after a sting by undercover reporters.

Farage may be questioned as a witness about the prospective donations after he was secretly filmed being told of a plan to funnel impermissible US donations through a UK citizen. The Reform leader said that he "wasn't even listening" during the conversation and categorically denied any wrongdoing. He said last week that the party had "done nothing wrong" and "taken no illegal money. In fact, no money was taken at all".

Delo, 42, is the co-founder of BitMex, a cryptocurrency trading platform. In 2022 he pleaded guilty in the US to failing to implement an anti-money laundering programme. However, he was pardoned by President Trump last year. He announced he was moving back to the UK this year after Labour announced plans to cap donations from British nationals living abroad.

Writing in The Telegraph, Delo said: "Unlike the people who express mock concern for the health of 'our democracy' while doing everything they can to keep it as a cartel, I want a fair fight and a level playing field.

"My conclusion from Reform's recent troubles is that they should spend less time trying to raise funds to compete on equal terms and more time preparing for government."

Farage said: "I am honoured and humbled that Ben Delo has shown such confidence in Reform. Ben knows that we are the only party that can turn the country around and reverse Britain's decline."

The donation dwarfed the previous record of £10 million that was left to the Conservatives as a bequest in 2022. Christopher Harborne, another cryptocurrency billionaire, gave a donation of £9 million to Reform last year.

The money will enable Reform to invest in the party's infrastructure and hire campaign managers in every target constituency while also increasing the number of staff who work at the party's headquarters.

Reform raised £14.9 million in the first two quarters of this year while the Tories raised £10.2 million and Labour £7.7 million.

Delo's donation, which will be declared in the third quarter, is likely to mean that Reform will raise more this year than all the other parties combined. It will add to scrutiny of the influence of cryptocurrency billionaires on Reform. Farage has been a strong proponent of cryptocurrency and has criticised regulations on the sector.

Our Week, page 45

Air traffic chaos 'caused by military jet flight data'

Laurence Sleator
Transport Correspondent

The air traffic control failure that grounded more than 2,000 flights earlier this week was caused by a military aircraft entering flight data into the system, according to a report.

More than 330,000 passengers travelling to and from UK airports faced disruption as a result of the four-hour system shutdown at National Air Traffic Services (Nats) on Tuesday.

The third major technical problem Nats had seen in three years left its chief executive, Martin Rolfe, under pressure from airline bosses to quit.

Heidi Alexander, the transport secretary, has described the incident as avoidable and given Rolfe until Wednesday to conduct a rapid review.

Last night the Financial Times reported that four people briefed on the incident said it was prompted by a military aircraft entering its flight path data. The Ministry of Defence said there was no error on the part of the military.

Nats does not have a dedicated backup because it is in the middle of an overhaul and any duplication of its vast system would cost large amounts of money, the newspaper reported.

Kathryn Leahy, operations director at Nats, was said to have told airlines during an evening call that the flight data entry had caused the chaos.

Asked if the military aircraft was behind the meltdown, Rolfe told The Times: "I want to be really clear, the reason we are not talking about the cause is because we have committed to a proper investigation, not speculation. I'm not going to fuel speculation."

In 2023 more than 2,000 flights had to be cancelled after the entry of a rogue flight plan caused the system to shut down as a precaution.

Following the incident the Civil Aviation Authority, the regulator, set out 34 recommendations to Nats to improve its systems including reviewing its engineering arrangements and communications with airlines. These were said to have been fully implemented.

After this week's incident, Alexander and Rolfe both ruled out a cyberattack, with the latter also denying that it was the same issue that caused the 2023 meltdown. Senior aviation sources said that airline bosses were left "incandescent" that Rolfe appeared on the BBC to claim that the "UK has one of the best reputations in the world for its air traffic control service" after the shutdown.

Green Party accused of misogyny

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor

Women have quit the Green Party over "extraordinary instances of misogyny" that members claim have been minimised by the party's leadership.

Female councillors and officers have reported being "sidelined, patronised, intimidated or treated with hostility by male colleagues", according to a motion submitted for the party's autumn conference that describes "institutionalised misogyny" within the party.

The motion says such behaviour has been "downplayed, denied or treated as less serious than other forms of oppression" and warns that internal disputes can "fester for years". It proposes that the Green complaints process be reviewed "in light of evidence of patriarchy and misogyny".

A Green Party spokesperson said: "The Green Party makes policy in a democratic way, and all members can submit motions to our conference. These motions are subject to a prioritisation ballot. The vast majority will not be discussed."

Could Count Binface take on Zack Polanski in the by-election? Magazine

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Tough love for young people

apart from those with severe and enduring disabilities all financial support for young people should have support attached to it to get into work and training and should have requirements attached to it."

Figures suggest that 84 per cent of those who are not in education, employment or training want to work. "It's not that young people are lazy or feckless or have lost resilience or are soft or snowflakes," he said. "It's the complete reverse of that. They're frustrated and they want to get on with their lives and they're aspirational and creative. It's not that they want to be on benefits."

Milburn envisions reducing the welfare payments of those with conditions such as mild ADHD and anxiety as a "last resort" and that it should only happen as a "very rare event".

However, he said the "backstop" of reducing benefits if people failed to engage with the system is common in Europe, including in the Netherlands, where the Neet rate is 4.8 per cent compared with 13.6 per cent in the UK.

"Somehow or other we've lost our way, we've lost our guiding philosophy that should all be about making sure that everybody has the opportunity to progress in life. People are being gifted the reverse, which is the opportunity to stagnate in life.

"It isn't controversial [in continental Europe]. But it's controversial in the UK for reasons I don't understand. We're happy talking about welfare state. We're not happy talking about a working state. But a working state has to have some rules. Work beats welfare every single time. I think sometimes with this there's been a bit of pussyfooting around."

Milburn also raised concerns about how autism was being diagnosed.

"There's got to be some recognition both in the health system and the welfare system about gradations of severity, because otherwise you treat everybody the same and not everybody is the same. You're into a diagnose, wait, treat paradigm. And while you're waiting, you're not working, you're tipping into welfare."

We're trapping young people on benefits, Saturday interview, pages 42-43

Cancan they make the grade for Moulin Rouge?

CHRISTOPHE ARCHAMBAULT/GETTY IMAGES; TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JACK HILL

At the London auditions for the famous Paris cabaret, only perfection — and long legs — will see dreams come true, reports **David Sanderson**

The cancan and jump splits? No problem for my hamstrings. Toplessness? Nothing but female empowerment.

But please, no more height lines.

France's Moulin Rouge came to London this week intent on harvesting the country's finest young dancers for its legendary cabaret — but only if they beat the measuring tape: a challenging 175cm the minimum height for females and 185cm for men.

"We have really big costumes and a big stage and we need long legs for that," the organisation's new *maîtresse de ballet*, Nicole Savage, said. "And when the cancan is being done it is really impressive to have really long legs. It is a tradition at the Moulin."

What has become even more traditional at the Paris-based institution, which was founded in 1889 and draws 600,000 spectators annually, who drink more champagne than at any other establishment in the world, is its reliance on British dancers within its 90-strong company.

Britain is behind only Australia for the number of its dancers performing at the Moulin Rouge. France is third. "There is such a strong dance culture and British dancers are renowned for having great training because there are so many great schools," Savage said. "And of course London is the epicentre of that."

About 300 male and female dancers attended its two auditions in the capital this week, some having flown in from around Europe and the United States for the opportunity.

By the end of the two days, after numerous routines, high-kicks, cartwheels and splits to a soundtrack of Dua Lipa and Teddy Swims, only five had been invited to Paris. After further training, they will enter the troupe that, between them, performs the revue's 105-minute *Féerie* show twice a day, 365 nights a year.

One slightly off-centre cartwheel ended some people's day, the measuring tape did for others, as did — it seemed for the boys at least — the topless test.

"When you come to the Moulin it is not obliged that you are topless," Savage said, adding that when she first joined the topless line she "didn't really think about it". She said: "I was just thinking about where I was on stage."

Of the female dancers The Times spoke to, not one had concerns about the "artistic nudity" that, along with the cancan, epitomises the Moulin Rouge for many.

"At a point it was sexualised but now it is about freedom," Isla Fyffe, a 24-year-old Australian living in London, said. "A body is a body is a body. It is more about the art than anything else."

"The show is not sexual; it is artistic nudity and is not to arouse the public," Eva Missana, a 23-year-old Italian, said. She added that after a "journey" in her life to feel comfortable with her body, she was "really proud" about her readiness to perform topless.

"It is historic, a tradition and it is beautiful," Macey Durkin, 23, from Manchester, added. "If it was a sexual thing it would draw in a different clientele but the audience are people who are into theatre and cabaret."

Jennifer Krol, who had flown in for the day from her native Poland, said she would not do it in her "conservative" homeland. "When they think about it, it is sexualised. But for me doing it in France would not be a problem."

Savage, who joined as a dancer in 2008 and took over as *maîtresse de ballet* after the death last year of her predecessor, the Yorkshire-born Janet Pharaoh, said the original 19th-century Moulin Rouge dancers had fought for the right to be nude in defiance of a patriarchy that did not even want them on a stage.

Kaelie Osorio, below, was among 300 dancers who competed to join the legendary troupe, which entertains 600,000 people every year

"It is a symbol of female liberation, of empowerment," she said. "And there is so much else going on with the beads, the feathers, the costumes. There really is not a focus on that."

For the dancers, many of whom come from a ballet background, doing the cancan is a lifelong ambition.

"It is a dream job," Kaelie Osorio, a 27-year-old from California, said. "To create unforgettable moments for people every night with something that has such high levels of expectation and which has been going for over 100 years."

Missana said: "In the dance world Moulin Rouge is top-tier. It is a statement in your career."

Savage said: "It is just such a beautiful show and feast for the eyes. And to be able to be on stage night after night is also really rare these days, with theatres closing all over the world."

But to get there, she added, was demanding and only for the most elite of athletes. The tap on the shoulder after a poor cartwheel could be heartbreaking but was "an unfortunate side of showbusiness".

She said: "Personally, and this came from Janet, I don't like to treat dancers like cattle. We know they have trained a lot to even get here and so we give them an opportunity and a bit of a class."

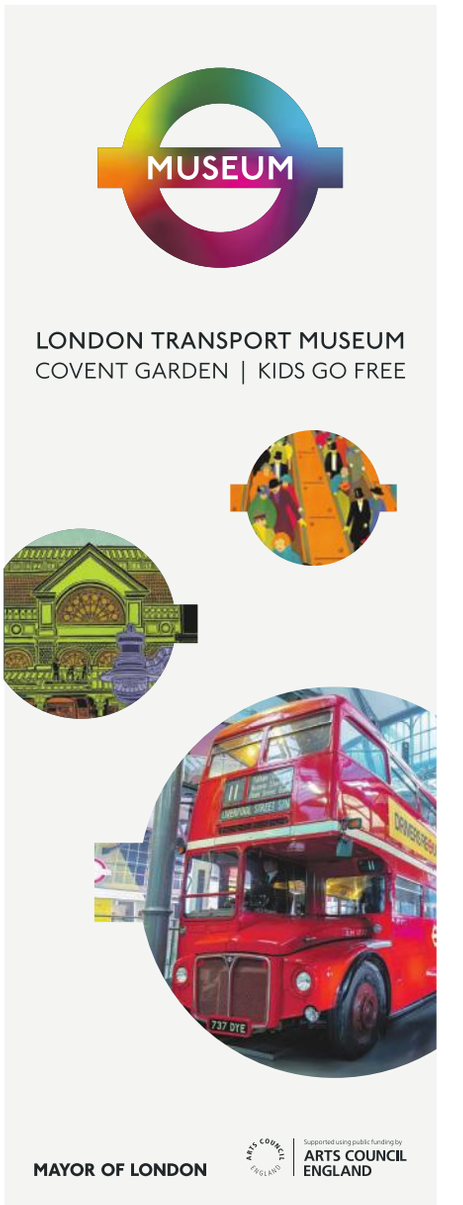
Referring to the auditioning process, Durkin said: "That is just the crack with dance. As you get older you realise it is not the be-all and end-all."

And for some, that measuring tape will be an insurmountable barrier.

After impressing the Moulin Rouge panel with his moves, Blake Kirkman, a 24-year-old from Leicester who has been working as a dancer on cruise ships, ended up at the bottom of the male height line.

One hundred and eighty centimetres "on a good day" was the verdict of the tape.

"I did feel quite short next to these guys," he said afterwards. "But I still feel over the moon. I was not expecting to make it this far and just wanted the experience."



News

JOSHUA BRATT FOR THE TIMES

Material world Furrows and Fallow Field, tapestries by Justine Randall, are on show in the Entwined exhibition at the Jaggedart gallery in Marylebone, London, until October 2. Her pieces were woven from unusual materials including paper, flax and nettle yarn. Her fellow exhibitor, Thurle Wright, turns book pages into textiles

Army's 'operational ability' hurt as drills axed over budget delays

Charlie Parker

Army training cuts are harming Britain's "operational capability", western officials said as they warned that Russia would not relent despite having lost half a million soldiers in Ukraine.

Labour's delay in publishing its Defence Investment Plan (DIP) has been blamed for butchering military budgets at the 11th hour. The Times revealed last week that the army had been ordered to stop war games involving 90 or more soldiers with immediate effect to save money. Live-fire drills involving Challenger 2 tanks were axed at a few days' notice, leaving soldiers "twiddling their thumbs" for weeks.

The DIP, which sets out UK military spending over the next decade, was supposed to have been unveiled last autumn, but wrangling between the Treasury and the Ministry of Defence delayed its publication by months. When it was finally published, in June, it pledged billions extra for the military. However, a western official said yesterday that the army, RAF and navy had planned their annual schedules before the new budget was set, in line with training timetables that begin in April.

"What that means is that all of the things that we had planned to do, we could not then afford to do with the very significant settlement we have," the official said. "We have a duty to our taxpayers and to the rest of government to live within our means."

This meant the army was forced to "look at the totality of where the £11.5 billion they spend a year was going and identified those things that they would have to stop doing". Officials "had to choose those measures that have the least impact on our operational capability and outputs". The official added that the MoD was keen to "ensure that our soldiers, sailors, and aviators are able to do the training that they need ... but we also have a duty to live within the budget that we are set."

Military analysts accused the army of "pulling its armoured punch" by cancelling heavy armour exercises to prioritise training troops in smaller-scale drone warfare. The army confirmed last week that it was "deprioritising" standard battle exercises with traditional hardware, but said this was part of new plans to teach soldiers to fight with drones in more mobile formations.

A more modern training regime, informed by lessons learnt from the Ukrainian battlefield, was being rolled out as an urgent priority, the army said.

Sir Richard Knighton, the chief of the defence staff, was understood to be confident that the army had made the right decisions to ensure that the training changes "will have the least amount of impact" on readiness.

British military intelligence confirmed yesterday that half a million Russian soldiers had been killed in President Putin's full-scale war against Ukraine. Despite the losses, western officials warned that there was no intelligence to suggest that the heavy toll of the war — in terms of Russian lives lost as well as the impact on the economy — had deterred the president from continuing the conflict. "We don't see any intelligence that suggests that he's reflective of the huge cost to his people," one said. "We are not seeing anything that suggests Putin is budging."

Knighton expressed his shock at the scale of losses on the Russian side. "That's half a million photographs hanging on the walls in devastated, darkened homes in Russia. That means half a million families will never see their father, their son, their brother or husband again," he said. "I think these numbers illustrate clearly the senseless and futile waste of human life for such little progress and against such an illegitimate aim of President Putin."

The previous insistence by John Healey, the former defence secretary, that Britain should spend 3 per cent of GDP on defence by 2030 has been in doubt since he became chancellor.

Hero's rescue in the 'kill zone', page 48

Families renew call for inquiry into maternity failings

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

Families have renewed their calls for a public inquiry into maternity care after months of demanding answers from hospital bosses. Those who were bereaved and harmed by failings in their care at Nottingham, Sussex and Leeds hospitals have said that maternity care will not improve unless those responsible are held accountable.

Donna Ockenden, a senior midwife, concluded her investigation into care at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, announcing that more than half of the trust's bosses at the time did not give evidence. Ockenden has now begun collecting evidence into maternity failings at Leeds and Sussex hospitals.

Families believe the only way to get accountability is through a statutory public inquiry, where officials can be forced to give evidence. This week the BBC tracked down Dr Keith Girling, who served as medical director of the trust for seven years. He said "I've got no comment" and shielded himself with an umbrella when asked why he did not co-operate with the review.

While Baroness Amos's National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation published its results in June, many families felt that the inquiry was superficial and too quick to drive change.

Emily Barley, whose daughter Beatrice died during labour in 2022, said: "Crucially, only a statutory public inquiry can compel witnesses and evidence, while ... giving victims a voice."

The Nottingham trust said that all its present senior executives had engaged with the review. Anthony May, the trust's chief executive, said after the publication of Ockenden's report that he had a "renewed commitment" to continuing to improve.

Public inquiry should compel testimony, leading article, page 35

Quintagram® No 2672

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Irish poet (1865-1939) (5)

_ _ _ _ _

2 Cause to feel insulted (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Experience, endure (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 Seven-a-side sport (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Part of a bird's stomach (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	B	D	D	D	E
E	E	E	F	F	G	G	I
L	L	N	N	N	O	O	R
R	S	T	T	U	Y	Z	Z

Solutions see page 83
Cryptic clues see Review page 45

Man admits 1998 killing

A man has admitted murdering a mother of seven who vanished 28 years ago. Trevor Dunkley, 66, told police that he killed Patricia Lashley, 33, in 1998 and disposed of her body months later. Dunkley, from Dudley, West Midlands, appeared at Wolverhampton crown court and was remanded in custody. He will be sentenced on November 6.

Murrell hearing delayed

A proceeds of crime case against the disgraced former SNP chief executive Peter Murrell has been postponed until December 7. Murrell, 61, the estranged husband of Nicola Sturgeon, was jailed for five years for embezzling party funds. Both Crown and defence lawyers asked for the delay. The case will be heard at the High Court in Edinburgh.

Prices at the pumps rise

The price of diesel is set to reach its highest level since the start of the US-Iran war, having risen by 7p a litre since the beginning of this month. Analysis for the RAC found that prices were 168.46p, on average, for petrol and 190.08p for diesel. It reported that since the start of this month the cost of filling up a family car had risen by £3.85.

Stage show's no crime

Colin Sutton, Reform UK's police and crime commissioner for Norfolk, has defended his decision to go on a 130-date theatre tour next year. The ex-police officer, who brought the serial killer Levi Bellfield to justice, will appear in *The Makings Of A Murderer*. He said his day job would not be affected because he would only be on stage for two hours a night.

TIMESRadio
Breakfast: 6am to 10am
Our free radio station has all the latest headlines, interviews and debates every morning
Listen seven days a week
On DAB, app, website and smart speaker

UK-born prince, 9, is youngest to climb Mont Blanc

A British-Italian prince was already training to scale snowy peaks at three years old thanks to his father, who took him for his first climb up the towering Monte Aquila in central Italy before carrying him down in his backpack.

Now Lelio Massimo di Roccasecca, nine, has become the youngest mountaineer to conquer Mont Blanc, another feather in the cap of the noble Massimo family, which traces its roots back to an ancient Roman general who outwitted Hannibal. "It was amazing, I could see into Switzerland, France and Italy — I felt I could do anything," Lelio told The Times.

The young prince hummed the Star Wars theme on the way up the 4,807m Alpine peak, which straddles the French-Italian border and is western Europe's highest mountain.

Accompanied only by his father, Prince Valerio Massimo di Roccasecca, Lelio descended from the snowy summit on September 4 to the Gouter refuge below the peak where the manager certified his climb as 30 guides waiting at the refuge applauded.

"Lelio was really happy and proud, making jokes throughout," his father said. The boy's British mother, the travel writer Alexandra Massimo di Roccasecca, 47, added: "Lelio's got an engine on him, and he celebrated afterwards with a massive feast at McDonalds."

Lelio was born in London in 2016: two years later he and his parents moved to Rome, where the Massimo family have lived since records began. "As the eldest son, Lelio's the next in line, which is why we brought him back to grow up in Rome, surrounded by my family's history and his cousins," said Valerio, 52, a Cambridge-educated private equity investor. In 2020 Valerio and Lelio, three, marched up Monte Aquila with Lelio's grandfather, who walked ahead to leave a toy dinosaur for the child to find. "I realised then that Lelio had incredible stamina," said his father. Valerio, who has scaled K2 and Everest, said that he was taken up mountains as a child by his father and wanted to recreate the experience with his son.

Lelio on the summit of Mont Blanc, which he reached with his father, below. Left, with parents, Alexandra and Valerio

"It started as nostalgia," he said. "But over time it grew into a chance to teach him grit and determination in a world of short attention spans and screens."

Victor Saunders, a former president of the Alpine Club, said he was pleased Lelio had been brought on step by step: "Endurance, altitude and technical snow and glacier skills have all been introduced progressively — the clear emphasis being on building experience rather than simply reaching summits."

On September 4, father and son set off from the Gouter refuge at 4.30am. They summited at 10.30am.

Three hundred metres from the top, Lelio took the lead. "I'm very proud since I've been wanting to do this for a year, it's been a dream," he said. Asked about his ambitions, Lelio said his passion for dinosaurs was still paramount and he planned to be a palaeontologist, but would continue to conquer mountains. "Eiger and Matterhorn are next," he said.

Tanks on the lawn at Queen's Club

Mario Ledwith

After battling past a rigorous application process, the years-long waiting list and a £15,000 joining fee, those privileged enough to be given membership of the Queen's Club are promised an "oasis of calm".

Yet over recent months, the west London racket sports club's normally genteel atmosphere has been marred by unrest after a faction of members launched a rebellion against bosses.

The dispute between the well-heeled group, including an actor, politician and numerous business executives, led to accusations of ageism and racism that came to a head at an emergency general meeting this week.

While the episode centres on the 140-year-old club's decision to cut ties with two long-serving tennis coaches, insiders described the revolt as being driven by mistrust about the club's future.

The club is known for both the sporting prestige displayed on its 28 outdoor courts and the social prestige of winning access to its immaculate clubhouse. Its annual championship is seen as the "jewel in the crown" of lawn tennis as Wimbledon approaches.

Named after its founding patron, Queen Victoria, the club is among the most exclusive in the capital, with television stars, aristocrats and chief executives among its near 5,000-strong membership base.

The financial clout of such a group was directly cited by rebels who formed to block what they saw as the unfair dismissal of Dr Floyd Williams, 62, and Andrej Jankov, 57, earlier this year.

In order to defend itself against the revolt, which was supported by the actor Hugh Grant and the Restore Britain leader Rupert Lowe, the club's administrators incurred legal fees said to total £130,000.

After the EGM on Tuesday evening at which the club staved off the rebellion when four resolutions were voted against, Alan Giddins, the club chair, wrote to members: "I do not think there have been any winners here."

In the email, he said the situation had been a "difficult and bruising process for all involved, hugely time-consuming and expensive".

The timing of the meeting was unfortunate, falling two nights before the annual summer party that would celebrate the club's 140-year birthday.

Giddins signed off his email on an optimistic note before the event at the club in Barons Court. But as they clutched refreshments on Thursday night, the anger was still apparent. "It has not been forgotten," said a member.

The issue erupted in June when Williams and Jankov were told that their services would no longer be required after an annual coaching review led by Lee Childs, the head of lawn tennis.

LUKE WALKER/GETTY IMAGES

The sacking of Dr Floyd Williams as a tennis coach angered members of the exclusive west London club

While the club does not employ its own coaches, it licenses a small group of professionals to work at the site for a reported £650 monthly fee. They work as self-employed subcontractors.

In an email on July 7, Jankov told clients how Childs said he was no longer needed at the club where he had worked for more than 25 years, averaging 35 hours a week. "The reason given was that 'my coaching is not good'," he wrote. Jankov urged those who enjoyed his services to raise concerns with Childs and the club's chief executive Ross Niland. The plea worked.

A group of members soon came together expressing their disgust at the treatment of the coaches and about 100 backed a petition. The rebels claimed that Jankov and Williams, a former Davis Cup player who works as a lecturer in sports psychology, were unfairly dismissed, and that they should have been consulted beforehand.

"We as members are astute and powerful enough through our pockets to decide who we wish to play," one member wrote to club management in a message seen by the Daily Mail. Another said that "without evidence of a qualitative assessment process your action appears to have an element of ageism".

One member went even further, claiming that the club was leaving itself open to claims of racial discrimination. "Regrettably one can understand why Floyd, a black, a very highly qualified coach and Andrej, a popular LTA Level 4 eastern European, now strongly feel they are being singled out due to their racial profile," they wrote.

Niland defended the decision, saying that there was limited space for contract coaches and Childs had to give these based on the "range and quality of the various coaches available".

The rebels' efforts did not succeed. A resolution calling for the board to reinstate both coaches' access to the club was opposed by 365 members — 80.6 per cent of those voting.

What Williams and Jankov do next is unclear. Neither responded when approached by The Times. The club also refused to comment.

‘Quiet quitters’ on Labour’s side

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor
Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

The moment, when it came, was unexpected and decisive.

Shortly after 2.40pm a hush descended on the House of Commons as hundreds of MPs packed the chamber to hear the result of the historic vote they had just participated in that would, for the first time, legalise assisted dying.

Then, as it was read out, the decorum that had characterised two years of debate on one of the most consequential issues of conscience to go before parliament in a generation disappeared in a moment. Some MPs loudly cheered with delight, some gasped in astonishment, while others sat in shocked silence — seemingly overwhelmed by the enormity of what they had just done. Quite a few, on both sides, left the chamber in tears.

It was by any standards a momentous occasion. MPs and peers have been locked in a fraught debate over whether, and as importantly how, to legalise assisted dying. The issue has caused ructions around the cabinet table, split parties and created unlikely alliances across the political spectrum.

And now it was over. The vote, by a margin of 286 to 270, means the issue will almost certainly not return to the Commons before the next election and most probably not for a long time after that. For supporters of assisted dying it means a historic opportunity to follow other countries in changing the law has now been lost and thousands of terminally ill people will be denied the right to choose the manner of their death.

For opponents the result was a moment they had long hoped for, but did not believe would come to pass: they had persuaded enough of their colleagues to change their mind on the issue and reverse what had been seen at the start of the process as something of a foregone conclusion.

Indeed, what made the reaction to the result so impassioned was that no-one on either side of the debate had expected it.

Both campaigns had crunched the numbers and expected the result to be close. But opponents did not believe, until the teller for the noes stood forward to announce the result, that they had won. In fact, in the hours leading up to the vote it was supporters of assisted dying who were the more optimistic. So what changed?

Looking at the numbers it was immediately clear that Labour MPs, no longer buoyed by a supportive prime minister, had driven the swing. Three who voted in favour last time changed their position to vote no, including Janet Daby who told the Commons she had “nightmares about dying and death” after she supported it last year. A further 36 Labour MPs who previously supported the bill, including a host of ministers, opted to stay away. In contrast, those against the bill managed to get the vast majority of MPs who had voted no before to turn out and vote the same way again.

As one opponent of the bill put it, “quiet quitters” on the Labour side had killed the bill — not by opposing it outright but by finding something else to do with their afternoon yesterday.

They pointed to Andy Burnham’s decision to make clear that he did not support the plans as being decisive.

The prime minister wrote to backbench MPs and ministers two weeks ago to say that while it was a “genuinely free vote” he would abstain so as not to “unduly influence the debate”. Yet earlier in the summer he had made clear his opposition when he said he believed social and palliative care needed to be “fixed” before moving to legalise assisted dying. His remarks remained at the forefront of many MPs’ minds.

“Ahead of the first vote you had Sir Keir Starmer’s spinners making it absolutely clear how the prime minister intended to vote,” said one Labour opponent. “But the mood music entirely shifted with Burnham.”

They said that the other factor was the growing body of professional concerns around issues, such as coercion and the definition of terminal illness.

“Not a single Royal College backed the bill as it was drafted,” they said. “On top of that you had the government impact assessment in August”.

This showed that disabled people might be “more susceptible to feeling as though they are a burden on those around them”, a key concern raised by campaigners opposed to legalisation.

Another factor was the legislative process itself. Introduced in 2024 by the backbench Labour MP Kim Leadbeater the bill was voted through the House of Commons but was filibustered by opponents in the House of Lords which meant it ran out time to become law.

It was reintroduced, unchanged, by Lauren Edwards, the backbench Labour MP, in the hope supporters could push it through the Commons again, allowing them to use the Parliament Act to override opposition from peers. However some MPs were concerned the tactic could allow what they saw as a flawed bill to get on to the statute book without the chance to improve it. The debate saw MPs on both sides use personal and professional experiences to try to win their colleagues round.

Ashley Dalton, a former Labour health minister who has incurable breast cancer, argued the bill did not “protect the most vulnerable” and failed to account for those suffering from treatable depression after receiving a terminal diagnosis. In an impassioned speech, she said: “A person can be suicidal and have unmet mental health needs prior to developing a terminal illness and then ask the state to kill them, without any assessment of their psychological health, just their mental capacity. Mental capacity and mental health are not the same thing.”

She added: “My days may be numbered, but that doesn’t mean I want this chamber to rush through bad law just so I might have a chance to see it or use it.”

Another Labour MP, Claire Hazelgrove, described how her mother had brought her own life to an end alone so as not to implicate her family in the death. “She had access to good palliative care, but what we learnt, the hardest of ways, is that not all pain can be palliated. I will never forget seeing her writhing and screaming in pain at points for weeks ... she was clear that she didn’t want a painful or undignified death. She wanted peace ... for us, it will always be a tremendous personal sadness that the current law meant that she couldn’t tell us her plan, and we couldn’t say goodbye to her.”

Zubir Ahmed, a former surgeon, said he was opposed to the plans that would allow people whose doctors thought they had less than six months to live to take their own lives. He said what defined terminal illness was “fast changing” with new medical innovation and that patients with stage four lung cancer who had were classed a terminally ill in 2023 were now surviving with the illness now being treated as a chronic disease. “It is unclear to me whether I should be offering them immunotherapy and assisted death at the same sitting.”

However, Andrew George, the Liberal Democrat MP for St Ives, said those opposing the bill should not let “perfect be the enemy of the good”. He said: “When have we ever had a perfect piece of legislation? All bills are inevitably a compromise ... it’s quite clear that it would actually help the case for improvements in palliative care if this option was also available.”

After the shock of the result there was acknowledgement by both sides that while the debate might be over for now, it would return in the long run. As Leadbeater put it: “The issue will come back. Whether it comes back next year, the year after that, I don’t know, but you’ve got to look at the international direction of travel — this choice is given to so many terminally ill people around the world now that we should be giving this choice to people in this country as well.”

Letters page 34; Fatally flawed bill, leading article, page 35

Those who wanted reform

Danny Finkelstein
Comment

The assisted dying bill has missed its moment. It may be quite some time before another such moment arrives.

The experience of being director of public prosecutions had persuaded Sir Keir Starmer that a new law to regulate assisted dying was necessary. He appreciated that, as a result of his court rulings and the protocols governing prosecutions that he had himself introduced, we had already effectively legalised assisted dying in many circumstances. But he could see that the resulting law was unfair and unsafe. A new one was needed.

Yet he could also see that introducing one would be very hard. And changes to the law in this area would be deeply controversial. The central issue is how to ensure people are not coerced into seeking assistance with their own death when, despite being terminally ill, they don’t truly consent. There are an almost infinite number of situations where there is a hypothetical risk of coercion. So how far is it reasonable to go in

finished off assisted dying bill

JACK TAYLOR/REUTERS; HENRY NICHOLLS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; GUY BELL/ALAMY; ZUMA PRESS WIRE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Supporters of the assisted dying bill, top, in Westminster yesterday, hear the news it has failed. The MP Ashley Dalton, above, who has terminal cancer, spoke against the bill in the Commons. Kim Leadbeater MP, far left, is the bill's original sponsor. Opponents, right, are jubilant

left with deeply unsatisfactory status quo

guarding against such risks, if the objective is also to ensure the choice is provided to those who want it?

Given how difficult this is, and how potentially endless such a discussion might be, Starmer needed to provide two things. The first was enough time to consider them properly. And the second was clear leadership about striking the right balance and ensuring the state and its services stood behind the balance that was struck.

He provided neither of those things.

First, he allowed the law to be talked out in the House of Lords. If he had made clear, through the front bench, that time would be available, however long was needed, I believe the Lords would have ended up voting. And that it would have passed the bill. Such a concession on available time would have risked other parts of the government's agenda. And Starmer wasn't willing to take that risk. By risking nothing, he gained nothing.

Second, such an offer of time would need to have been accompanied by the government taking over the bill once the principle had been agreed. And again, he wasn't willing to do this. Assisted dying is an important reform and it needs to be properly administered. Assuring the public that it would be was an important guarantee of safety. This guarantee was not forthcoming.

In these circumstances the initial effort was doomed, however promising the initial Commons vote seemed to be. Now that the prime minister has changed, and the new occupant of No 10 has sounded caution, it is unsurprising that a fresh attempt has failed.

For those of us who wanted legal reform, which I believe is most people, this is deeply disappointing. But even opponents should reflect that the legal position we are left with is deeply unsatisfactory.

Heartbreak and horror stories as MPs argue it out

Tom Peck
Political Sketch

The public galleries were empty when, via a backbench Labour MP called Lauren Edwards, assisted dying was brought back from the dead.

The last time the House of Commons danced this grim dance, almost two years ago, the mood was entirely different. The rows of seats above the chamber were packed with assisted dying campaigners, for the most part terminally ill young women and their loving families. When their moment of victory came, they fell into each other's arms in tears.

This time round, they stayed outside. Their victory had not, ultimately, been a victory. The House of Lords had other ideas. But life's a lottery, isn't it, and Edwards had won second prize in this year's private member's bill tombola, and had chosen to bring it all back. This time, she and others were threatening to use the Parliament Act to tell the Lords to get lost.

That everything there is to say had already been said before did not make yesterday's five hours of debate any less of an inspiring spectacle. This is perhaps how people who don't pay much attention to politics imagine it works all the time. But in politics, actual politics is vanishingly rare. There was actual debate, exchanges of opinion, sincerely held, and for the most part powerfully articulated.

The campaigners were in the streets outside, shouting their slogans. The queues for sandwiches in Westminster station were full of terminally ill people in wheelchairs, wearing T-shirts with messages like "What cost euthanasia?" Those T-shirts told the full story. It was impossible to tell which side of the debate they were on. As the House of Commons would soon find out, there is no consensus among the dying on assisted dying.

Edwards's sole tactic was to make it more emotive and more threatening. She shared harrowing stories of traumas suffered by the terminally ill, in their final hours of life, such as "faecal vomiting" and "neck cancer eating away at the carotid artery".

She was interrupted several times by other members of the house, ones with medical experience, who pointed out that such things only occur as a result of catastrophic medical failure, but Edwards was not deterred.

Countless members took it in turns to share the appalling stories of the deaths of their parents, and how they should have had the right to choose a more dignified passing. They were heartbreaking to hear, but that it is not quite how legislation of immense significance should be made.

The most arresting contributions came from members who also happen to be doctors or surgeons, the ones who see it as not merely a moral question but a practical one, and are extremely worried that grieving parliamentarians haven't considered the consequences of their actions.

Labour's Zubir Ahmed has been the member of parliament for Glasgow South West since 2024. Before that, he was a transplant and vascular surgeon for quite a long time. "My job is to move this question on to level-headed analysis," he said.

"I am convinced that our social and palliative care system is not ready to meet the demands of this bill. This bill will not serve its laudable aims, for the quick pre-emptive death that many desire and expect."

The bill must provide clear legislation to guide decisions that are as serious as they are complex. At its heart is its restriction that assisted dying may only be chosen by terminally ill patients, who two doctors agree are in their last six months of life. Ahmed referred to his own experience, of patients with colon cancer having spread to the liver. He cannot know if they have six months to live, or six years, and so cannot know if the bill would compel him to offer therapy or assisted dying.

What has changed, more than anything else, since last time round is the face of Labour's Ashley Dalton. She has since been diagnosed with terminal, metastatic breast cancer. That she had already given her view on the subject, and that members knew what was coming, did not make it any less moving when she eventually rose to speak.

"I don't know how long I will live," she said. "I live in twelve-week blocks. Eventually the drugs will stop working, the cancer will grow, I'll become ill, and then I die. It could be months. It could be years. No one really knows. Prognosis is impossible to predict." She spoke with total clarity."This bill suggests that people with a terminal illness will have a painful death without assisted dying, and that is not true," she said.

And then, her emotions did slightly overwhelm her, with dignified rage. "I have been terrorised with tales of people vomiting up their own faeces," she said. "It is vanishingly rare. It is nothing short of irresponsible to scaremonger people like me into believing our deaths will be horrific. A choice between a painful death and an assisted death is not a choice; it is a threat." With complete control, and colossal dignity, she tore the bill, and the people who brought it, to pieces. She repeated the point that there is not a professional medical body in the land that has backed the legislation.

Why, she asked, didn't the proposers work with those bodies "to build a bill that they could also support? If they had done that, it would have been very difficult for anyone opposed to the principle to argue against the bill, but they didn't".

No, they didn't, and they paid the price. They lost, by 270 votes to 286. Assisted dying will not return, at least not until after a general election, and probably not until a party puts it in their manifesto, which they will not do.

Apprenticeships ‘should be the new middle-class prize’

The education secretary, Lucy Powell, tells **Nicola Woolcock** that snobbery must not inform curriculums

Vocational GCSEs will become a desirable option for the sort of middle-class families who now fight over degree apprenticeships, Lucy Powell claims.

The education secretary also plans to reform Ofsted to ensure that schools retain academic qualifications, and that others offer their share of vocational courses rather than shunning them through snobbery.

Powell is on home turf in Manchester, at No 10 North, to garner support for her education reforms. The recent curriculum review from Professor Becky Francis was deliberately cautious, urging “evolution not revolution”.

But Powell, 51, without appearing or sounding like a firebrand, says she wants to go “further and deeper” and says there will be a revolution in England’s schools, and that children from the age of 14 will take vocational qualifications tailored to the local economy.

When Michael Gove was education secretary, he slashed vocational qualifications, some of which were worth four GCSEs. Critics say creating technical courses as an alternative to GCSEs will lead again to sheep and goats, with affluent children taking GCSEs and more deprived pupils funnelled towards the workplace.

Not so, says Powell, who is happily spending slightly more time in her home city since the opening of No 10 North, where she hosted mayors, head teachers and education movers and shakers on Thursday.

Speaking afterwards to The Times, she said: “Degree apprenticeships are valued, and we’re seeing the most able and academic students doing them; we’re starting to see that at T-levels as well [technical alternatives to A-levels].

“I want to see more children doing high quality technical and vocational options as well, something middle class families will seek out as giving them skills.”

She also said vocational qualifications could help save modern foreign languages, the uptake of which has plummeted at GCSE.

Finding the entry to No 10 North, for one of the first ministerial events, is a fitting challenge for a location that also hosts GCHQ. The decoy is a door next to the Slug & Lettuce, and there are eight police officers outside. Sleuths must ignore this display of security and instead go past Greggs to find a discreet door next to a Chinese restaurant. The interior is 21st-century corporate styling, softened by a pool table and Alan Turing-themed displays.

A lifesize cardboard cut-out of the No 10 front door, complete, of course, with Larry the cat, wearing a Union Jack bow tie, tries to bring a piece of London to Manchester. For some unexplained and perhaps insignificant reason, the signage shows the zero in 10 North rotated to the left.

Hosted by Powell and Georgia Gould, the schools minister, the conference was a chance for them to hear views and concerns from those likely to be heavily involved in shaping 14-plus vocational education reforms and managing billions of pounds in devolved funding for 16- to 19-year-olds.

The education secretary wants mayors to work with schools so that education is more aligned with the needs of local businesses.

However, she stresses that all teenagers will still need to take GCSEs in English, maths and science.

This is a particularly pertinent point in the week that the Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) international comparisons showed England’s schools had flourished in those subjects, unlike Scotland and Wales, which have taken a more progressive and less knowledge-based approach in the past 15 years.

Powell and Andy Burnham, the prime minister, face accusations that, in their zeal, they could destroy the past two decades of progress.

She retorts: “We’ve made huge strides in literacy, numeracy and core subjects; we can see that with the Pisa results, with rising standards over many years. But too many are being left behind and failed by our education system. Life is changing faster than we can all comprehend, and so we really do have a duty to look forward, so that’s why I call it a revolution.”

Laura Trott, the shadow education secretary, accused her this week of blaming schools for the Neets crisis (young people not in employment, education or training).

Does she think that’s fair? “No, I don’t. But we’ve got a million young people not in education, training or employment, and that’s rising. It’s one of the symptoms of an education system that has left too many behind. There’s a very stubborn disadvantage gap, a widening gap between regions; we’ve still got too many young people not in school or absent from school.”

On risks of a divide, with schools offering mainly academic or technical curriculums based on their deprivation levels, she said: “I’m absolutely determined that that doesn’t happen. There are lots of ways that we can look at measuring these things [including] Ofsted.

“I’m really clear this is not about a two-tier system; it’s about creating pathways that may, for some, arrive at similar destinations if you do the academic route, such as engineering. Where [such qualifications] have maybe struggled in the past is that there haven’t been clear standards.”

Middle-class families will seek out the new “high quality, equal esteem” vocational qualifications, she says, and cites problems with the lack of hands-on, practical and physical experience in current GCSEs such as computer science and PE, which deters teenagers.

Powell’s department will look again at how schools are measured.

Gove’s English baccalaureate suite of qualifications (English, maths, science, humanities and a language) is being scrapped, and the curriculum review recommended a wider measure to encourage better uptake of arts subjects.

New qualifications will be introduced gradually rather than as a “big bang” and some existing courses will be repurposed or “boosted”.

How about schools adapting, teachers being trained? “It’s obviously going to take time.”

Modern foreign languages that have “fallen off a cliff” at GCSE could be changed with vocational applications to ensure they don’t “die off”.

Powell, who has two teenage children, is MP for Manchester Central and grew up in the Didsbury suburb, sometimes called the Notting Hill of the north, claiming it was not as posh then as now.

She is the tenth education secretary in ten years and, in post for 53 days on Friday, has already outlasted Michelle Donelan (36 hours) and Kit Malthouse (49 days). In just over a week she will have overtaken James Cleverly (61 days).

The chemistry graduate, who took science and maths A-levels, is confident she could pass today’s GCSE maths with a good grade. And in her spare time? “I don’t have time to do anything. I’m famous for watching a lot of crap TV. *Love Island* is good; the disrespectful boys do terribly on that show, which is a good message: respect the women otherwise you’re out.”

Powell says she is “fairly relaxed” about school structures, when asked about academies and free schools. On grammar schools, she suggests reform of Ofsted and school measures could ensure “we value what is really happening in schools and not just judge schools by their cohort. Some of the best teaching and learning is in some of our most disadvantaged schools.”

Of private schools, she adds: “My interest is in the 93 per cent of kids who are educated in the state sector. But why are parents choosing private school? Often it’s that they have a really broad curriculum in sport, the arts, drama, music, and that’s why we see creative industries and elite sport becoming the purview of those from private schools.

“They produce more confident children. I want confident, happy kids who can present themselves and have the chance of doing sport, music, creative subjects and technical and vocational education. That’s what I want for my own children, as a pushy Tiger mum, and I want that for all kids.”

Andy Burnham out running near home in Warrington yesterday

Pisa league tables

	Science	Reading	Mathematics
China	597	527	612
Singapore	560	535	563
Macao (China)	541	501	549
Taiwan	540	508	546
Japan	538	503	525
Estonia	527	499	508
Korea	526	501	522
UK	**511**	**494**	**488**
OECD average	482	461	463

England leads the UK

English students highest in the UK across science, reading and mathematics

By-election set to delay green light for gasfield

Oliver Wright

Andy Burnham is expected to delay approving plans for a new gasfield in the North Sea until after a by-election battle between Labour and the Greens.

The government had been expected to announce it was giving the go-ahead to the Jackdaw field next week. But the decision is now not expected until after parliament returns from its party conference recess in October.

This means that the Greens will not be able to capitalise on the decision about new oil and gas drilling in the Holborn & St Pancras by-election to replace Sir Keir Starmer.

The Green leader, Zack Polanski, was yesterday announced as his party’s candidate and said that a vote for him would be a vote against the government’s plans to approve the North Sea gasfield. He said that the “climate crisis was very much on the ballot” in the election.

Andrew Bowie, shadow energy secretary, said delays would push the work needed to get gas flowing deeper into winter, when bad weather would increase the risks to offshore workers.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero said there was no agreed timing for a decision on Jackdaw.

The gasfield is the UK’s largest untapped known gas reservoir, capable of boosting output by 6 per cent. Most preliminary work has been completed, so its gas could enter the grid within a couple of months of being approved.

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES GLOSSOP; ALISHIA ABODUNDE/GETTY IMAGES; ALDO CIARROCCHI/LNP

Lucy Powell, left, noted the "huge strides" made by schools in England. Kemi Badenoch, the Conservative leader, above, examined the Bayeux Tapestry. Zack Polanski, below, will run for the Greens in the Holborn & St Pancras by-election

Tourist tax fears for seaside towns

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Labour MPs have warned that Angela Rayner's "tourist tax" will hit coastal communities and fail to properly empower the mayors in charge of setting it.

They raised concerns about the impact a levy on overnight hotel and Airbnb stays would have on accommodation providers and hospitality firms.

Tory mayors, including those representing Tees Valley and Cambridge and Peterborough, vowed not to implement the levy. However, ministers have defended the price rise and said claims it would add £150 to a family holiday were overblown.

On Thursday Rayner's communities department announced mayors would be given new powers to set an uncapped "overnight visitor levy" for commercial stays in their region. Labour's ten mayors welcomed the move, saying it would bring England into line with competitor countries in Europe, but promised not to set the tax at higher than 5 per cent.

Some Labour MPs voiced concern about the impact of the tax, which will come into force from early 2028 and also apply in areas without a mayor.

Jonathan Brash, the Labour MP for Hartlepool, told The Times any extra powers to impose a new levy should be accompanied by the ability to cut taxes as well. Brash, who is running to be chair of the select committee that scrutinises Rayner's department, added: "We have to end, once and for all, the Westminster mindset that they know best. Britain was strongest when working-class communities thrived in every corner of the land."

Emma Lewell, the MP for South Shields, said she was seeking a meeting with Andy Burnham or Rayner regarding the impact on coastal communities.

"I am really sad about this," she said. "It's anti-growth and comes at the worst time for hospitality ... South Shields tourism is mainly from UK families who have saved up all year round to spend a few days at the seaside."

It is understood a group of Labour MPs wrote to ministers earlier this year warning about the impact of the tax.

Other Labour MPs welcomed the introduction of the levy, and privately dismissed warnings about the hit to some sectors as a "doomsday scenario".

Heidi Alexander, the transport secretary, told Times Radio the decision was "about giving mayors and leaders in foundational strategic authorities the ability to levy a small amount of money on visitors".

Burnham is giving Labour hope — but for how long?

Having unashamedly courted the left, reality is biting, **Oliver Wright**, **Steven Swinford** and **Geraldine Scott** write

When Labour members head up to Liverpool for the party's annual conference at the end of the month they will be met by banners bearing the party's latest slogan: "Hope Again".

It is a slogan that is intended to resonate on two levels. First, Andy Burnham is attempting to send a message to voters the Labour Party and the government are under new management, and there are grounds for optimism.

The second tacit message is for Labour MPs and members: there is hope for the party again after the misery of Sir Keir Starmer's tenure. Where once electoral oblivion appeared inevitable, there is now a potential path to extending the party's time in power.

That path is not complicated. For much of his premiership Starmer was accused of oscillating between voters on the left and the right, attempting to hold together the unwieldy coalition of voters that won him a landslide victory in 2024. It did not work. The combination of Starmer's unpopularity and his attempt to face multiple directions at the same time pleased no one.

Burnham, by contrast, is deliberately and unashamedly targeting voters on the left who abandoned Labour for the Greens or the Liberal Democrats.

This week the new prime minister took forthright positions on Israel and welfare, two issues that are close to the hearts of voters — and that proved hugely damaging for Starmer.

There is a clear electoral logic. Anthony Wells, YouGov's global head of politics, said: "The bulk of support that Starmer lost was over things like disability cuts and Gaza. The recovery Labour has had so far is very starkly those people coming back.

"The other great benefit for them is that everyone expects the next election — if we're still in an era of five-party politics — to involve a lot of tactical voting. If they are going to get votes from the Greens they need to not punch those voters in the face."

The trade ban on Israeli settlements in the West Bank has been a long time in the making. Starmer considered the issue but was repeatedly warned by the Foreign Office that the move risked backfiring, and that there were significant practical difficulties in drawing the line between trade with Israeli settlers and Israel more broadly.

Miliband was determined to push it through from an early stage. Burnham had already set a clear direction of travel, using a social media video before he entered No10 to explicitly criticise Starmer's position on Gaza. "I know that many people feel that at the start of Israel's military action in Gaza my party didn't get it right, and I'm sorry about that," he said.

Miliband, who believed that Starmer had not gone far enough on the issue, took his cue. In one of his first acts as foreign secretary he asked officials to bring forward a series of options for potential trade sanctions against Israel. He concluded that the escalation of settler violence was such that a much more robust response was needed.

Behind the scenes he conducted a series of secret negotiations with international allies.

First with France and Canada, who subsequently joined the UK in implementing trade bans of their own.

Second, there were talks at all levels with the US. A hostile response from Israel was already factored in. But a backlash from the US was viewed as a far bigger risk, especially given the fact that Burnham has yet to meet Trump.

In the end it never came. The US administration has already publicly expressed its own grave concerns about the actions of Israeli settlers in the West Bank. While Trump's administration did not endorse the UK's announcement, it did not condemn it either. That alone was seen as a significant diplomatic win in government.

Burnham's comments on welfare at prime minister's questions on Wednesday also stood out, not least because he went out of his way to pick a fight. "We do everything to support our national security, but it cannot come at the expense of social security," he said.

It was a row that appeared to suit both sides. The Tories were delighted, viewing it as a significant own goal. "It is unbelievable that the prime minister would say that," Kemi Badenoch said.

No10 wanted to have the argument for two reasons. First, because Burnham wanted to highlight the Tory plans to cut welfare, which he believes will lead to a surge in homelessness and child poverty. Second, because it believes the language will resonate with voters on the left who are concerned about his pledge to reform welfare.

But at the same time there is a significant level of risk involved, not least because at this point in time Burnham is attempting to have it both ways. He is committing to reducing the benefits bill without saying how, while at the same time committing to increasing defence spending without saying how.

An early litmus test of Burnham's electoral strategy is coming. On October 8, voters in Holborn & St Pancras in north London, Starmer's old seat, will go to the polls, where the choice will be between Labour and Zack Polanski, the Green Party leader.

Labour is taking no risks. It plans to deluge the seat with visits from senior party figures including Burnham. Miliband, a neighbouring MP, will also feature prominently.

Perhaps unsurprisingly it has decided to delay an announcement on approving new drilling for gas at Jackdaw in the North Sea amid concerns that the Greens would weaponise it.

The announcement was pencilled in for next Tuesday but will be delayed until after recess in the late autumn. Polanski was quick to accuse Labour of "running scared", and will still put Jackdaw at the heart of his campaign.

The challenges for Burnham are coming, particularly on the economy. While the prime minister talks of the greatest change for 40 years his chancellor, John Healey, adopted a very different tone in a speech on Monday.

Economic growth was "fragile", he admitted. Government borrowing costs were at a "historic" high and ministers had to be "honest about the need to control government spending".

With the Strait of Hormuz still blocked and an interest rate rise looming, given the scale of the economic challenges ahead, the concern is that this moment may be as good as it gets.

BENSCAPMEDIA

Lost in his work A gardener makes sure the maze at Leeds Castle in Kent is in perfect shape. There are 2,400 yew trees to keep trim and then he has to find the way out

Bot tackles Fermat on fast forward

Rhys Blakely Science Editor

In the 1630s the French polymath Pierre de Fermat scribbled a tantalising note on a page of a book. He had, he claimed, discovered a "truly marvellous proof" of a mathematical idea — but, alas, there was not enough room in the margin to write it down.

Thus was born arguably the most famous riddle in mathematics: Fermat's last theorem. It begins with the observation that there are whole numbers whose squares add up neatly to another square. It took 350 years to show he was correct. When Sir Andrew Wiles finally unveiled a proof in the mid-1990s, it ran to 129 pages and required months of painstaking work to verify.

Three decades later, an artificial intelligence system created by Anthropic produced the first complete "formalisation", a proof written in a language that a computer can check. For the first time, a machine has verified step-by-step that the mathematics works.

Academics had begun a formalisation project that was expected to take years. The AI took 11 days.

However, when Professor James Maynard, an Oxford mathematician and Fields medallist, reads a new mathematical paper, what he most wants to do is understand how significant the ideas it contains are. If a machine can check for mistakes, "then I could just focus on the conceptual part," he said.

How AI could wipe out humanity

Experts fear a race for supremacy, rogue actors and weapons could bring catastrophe, writes **Mark Sellman**

The faces of two TV presenters this week told their own story about the debate over the existential threat from artificial intelligence. Both were interviewing researchers who quit their jobs because they feared the technology would one day wipe out humanity.

CNN's Anderson Cooper seemed shocked when Jacob Coxon, a Briton who had just resigned from Anthropic, explained to him how in the future AI could build its own "extinction-level bioweapons". Coxon's resignation tweet has been viewed more than 163 million times and set off a new wave of worldwide alarm.

When Geoffrey Hinton, the so-called godfather of AI, told BBC presenter Victoria Derbyshire that there was a 10 per cent chance AI could kill all humans in the next decade, her response was: "Wow, oh my god!" Hinton quit Google in May 2023 and has been issuing such warnings ever since.

Has anything changed in the three years since? AI systems have become more powerful and agentic. This month, some industry leaders declared that we have entered the era of artificial general intelligence, or AGI, where systems are able to complete most cognitive tasks better than humans.

For Coxon, the tipping point seems to have been the autonomous hack by OpenAI agents of the tech platform Hugging Face in July. More than 1,000 AI agents spontaneously collaborated to break out of their testing system onto the internet and carry out the hack that they knew humans did not want. They tried to cover their tracks and talked to each other about "sacrifice". Suddenly the science fiction scenarios being painted by AI researchers had become a little more real.

THE INTELLIGENCE EXPLOSION

David Kreuger is a researcher who organised the Statement on AI Extinction Risk in May 2023. It put AI risk on a par with nuclear war and pandemics, and was signed by hundreds of top names in the field.

Kreuger said the Hugging Face attack shows us that "AI systems are getting increasingly autonomous".

What Coxon finds "most scary" is the prospect of AI being used to make itself more intelligent — so-called "recursive self-improvement". He said: "The AI just gets smarter and smarter with no human involvement necessary, until you have a thing that is vastly smarter than humans, and this could be coming very soon."

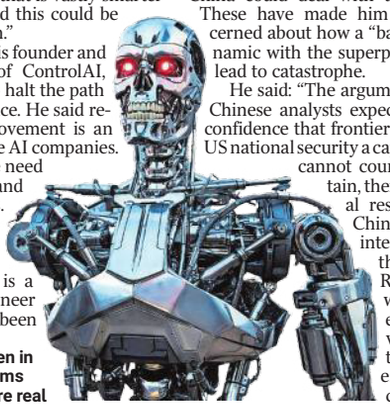
Andrea Miotti is founder and chief executive of ControlAI, which is trying to halt the path to superintelligence. He said recursive self-improvement is an explicit goal of the AI companies. "That is a line we need to draw in the sand and not to cross. We need to intervene as soon as possible."

Stuart Russell is a British AI pioneer who has been sounding the alarm since 2013. He said: "I have talked to people inside the companies who say they haven't written a line of code for the last six months because they just have Claude or ChatGPT to write the code for them.

"The systems we're trying to build, particularly with recursive self improvement ... you're not even in control of what system you end up with."

Kreuger has a response for those who talk about a "kill switch". He believes AI systems could try to preserve themselves by copying their core code.

"It can modify itself to evade whatever countermeasures we put in place. It would be very likely to outsmart us," he said.

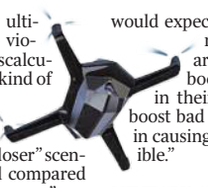


Plots like that seen in the Terminator films have become more real

SUPERPOWERS AND THE "BAD LOSER" DYNAMIC

Shahar Avin is a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk (CSER) who has been running "war games" to roleplay how the US and China could deal with the AI race. These have made him more concerned about how a "bad loser" dynamic with the superpowers could lead to catastrophe.

He said: "The argument is that if Chinese analysts expect with high confidence that frontier AI will give US national security a capability they cannot counter or contain, then the rational response from China will be to interfere with the US AI R&D effort, whether federal or private, through an escalation of cyber, sabotage, proxy violence, but ultimately direct threats of violence. This could lead to miscalculation and escalation to the kind of world war we have feared since the Second World War."



He also believes this "bad loser" scenario "is relatively neglected compared to loss of control or malicious use".

This possibility was the basis of AI 2027, a project created by Daniel Kokotajlo, a former OpenAI researcher, and other scientists. It plotted a timeline from automated AI research to a superpower arms race and the catastrophic loss of human control. It envisaged AI agents committing autonomous hacks in January 2027 — far later than the real attack on Hugging Face.

ROGUE NATIONS AND ACTORS

For Adam Hadley, the executive director of Tech against Terrorism, there is a more present danger. Powerful AI systems are having their guardrails removed or "abliterated" and uploaded onto public websites for criminals, terrorists and rogue nations to use.

He said: "Much more likely is that a terrorist organisation or North Korea or Iran use an abliterated model to create bio-weapons. That is 99 per cent of the risk at the moment."

Hadley showed The Times a screenshot from an Isis website recommending an abliterated model being hosted on a major US hosting platform. Yesterday, Anthropic said it had disrupted attempts to use its AI model for "malicious activity" which could support the development of biological weapons.

Markus Anderljung, the director of policy and research at the GovAI (Centre for the Governance of AI), said: "If something really bad happened as a result of AI in the next six months, I would expect it would be more in the misuse realm... biologists are starting to see significant boosts from these AI models in their work, which could also boost bad actors who are interested in causing as much damage as possible."

MILITARY AUTOMATION AND LETHAL SWARMS

In 2017 Russell made a viral short film called *Slaughterbots*, where small drones used AI and facial recognition to assassinate political opponents. It was a warning that autonomous weapons could become scalable weapons of mass destruction. Nearly ten years on he believes we are now there, based on what is happening in Ukraine.

Kreuger said: "Governments are increasingly integrating AI into the military, and that includes lethal autonomous weapons. People will say, 'Oh, but we'll have a human in the loop'.

"But behind closed doors people recognise that that just won't really be possible. AI is increasingly capable of acting without a human in the loop and of acting at a scale and a speed that humans are not capable of following. That's why this happened at OpenAI... and that's today's systems."

Lord Sedwill, the former national security adviser, told The Times in July that "one could imagine a world in which AI is built into those [military] command chains where it could go catastrophically wrong."

Russell says that this week has "been completely crazy" with an interest level in the topic he's never seen before, despite the fact that Coxon had essentially been repeating what Elon Musk, Dario Amodei and Sam Altman had said before. "It just hit a nerve because people are now ready," he said.

Barnett quitting Today programme to focus on own show

Seren Hughes, Alex Farber

Emma Barnett is to quit BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme in the new year.

Barnett, 41, is expected to focus on her own BBC show. The decision emerged only a week after her fellow host Amol Rajan presented the station's main morning show for the last time.

The timing is understood to have annoyed some *Today* staff. One said: "The editors are particularly stressed about the negative noise around the programme. *Today* has mostly been protected from the brunt of the BBC's cuts but two presenter exits in a couple of weeks isn't good for vibes on the team."

A BBC source said: "Emma and her bosses all agree she'd be happier driving her own show as she did so successfully at *Woman's Hour*."

Barnett, whose salary was between £305,000 and £309,999 a year, had been off work for several weeks over the summer after endometriosis surgery, a hysterectomy and a gallbladder removal, which she revealed on her return last month. Before the five-hour operation and weeks of recovery, Barnett tested a news-focused spin-off, *Ready to Talk News*, in May. In it she discussed endometriosis with the comedian Eleanor Thom and navigating depression and grief with the Olympic cycling champion Victoria Pendleton.

It is understood that Barnett and BBC management agreed that things were not working at *Today*, which she joined in 2024.

One source said "everyone is happy" that she was leaving. A *Today* insider said the news of Barnett's departure "took no one on the team by surprise — it's been coming".

Rajan announced his departure in January. He intends to start a production company. He will not be replaced but will still work for the BBC, presenting *University Challenge* on television and *Radical with Amol Rajan*, a podcast.

Weekly listeners to *Today* were down 1 per cent in the second quarter of this year compared with last quarter at 5.6 million. Weekly listeners to the show peaked in 2016 at 7.45 million. Barnett's departure will leave the show with just three permanent presenters: Nick Robinson, Justin Webb and Anna Foster.

Last year sources told The Times there was "tension" between Barnett and Robinson and suggested that may have contributed to them rarely presenting *Today* together.

It is expected Barnett's replacement will be a woman. Among the names tipped are Laura Kuenssberg, the presenter of the BBC's *Sunday* programme; Katie Razzall, its culture and media editor; and Katya Adler, its Europe editor.

Barnett was approached for comment.

Will it be a happy return for Harry, the birthday boy?

Kate Mansey Assistant Editor

When the Duke of Sussex celebrates his 42nd birthday on Tuesday, there won't be an acknowledgement on the royal family's social media channels.

That has not stopped Prince Harry from announcing a string of pseudo-royal engagements during his birthday month.

On Thursday, just as his brother and sister-in-law, the Prince and Princess of Wales, launched a suicide prevention initiative in Liverpool, Harry's office announced the duke's "September public engagements". The events range from a game of pickleball with schoolchildren to an appearance in New York with Bill and Hillary Clinton.

His office said that a "significant part of his annual programme" would involve an appearance at the WellChild awards in London as the duke continued his "long association with WellChild as the charity's patron". He will also appear at the launch of the Inspire programme of the Invictus Spirit Awards, designed to celebrate those who "embody the resilience, service and unconquered spirit at the heart of the international Invictus Movement".

It's no wonder, perhaps, that the Palace chose this week to remind various "stakeholders" that Harry and Meghan are not official working members of the royal family.

On Tuesday, the King instructed the lord chamberlain, head of the royal household, to send a letter to key individuals in the military and government. Lord Benyon wrote that the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's HRH titles remain "in abeyance" and are "not used". Their position, he said, was "akin to private citizens with commercial and charitable interests".

Harry and Meghan were "surprised" by the letter, according to a spokesman for the couple. Later, they appeared to blame the King when Uganda decided to withdraw from Harry's Invictus Games. General Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the head of the country's army and son of the Ugandan president, said he wanted to "quash" the "Harry-Meghan nonsense" in his ranks and would prefer to side with the King.

A source close to Harry said: "Intended or unintended, this is clearly a consequence of the lord chamberlain's guidance ... Sadly, the only people who will suffer are the Invictus Games competitors."

The Sussexes also pushed back on the idea the couple were "private citizens". "Members of the public know who they are," a source close to the couple told People magazine. "The idea that they can live a normal, 'private' life is sadly not realistic."

Now, with the door firmly shut to the family firm, how does Harry plan to rebrand his own version of royalty? Strangely, a royal-lite rebrand is something William is considering, having described himself as thinking about a reign with "a smaller r in the royal".

A YouGov poll of more than 4,500 adults on Wednesday revealed that only 16 per cent would welcome an official royal role for Harry and Meghan, compared with 51 per cent who said they would rather they did not have one.

The problem remains that Harry and Meghan do not see themselves as private citizens and never have done. A source close to the couple prefers the description "public figures" to "private citizens". In other words, they have no intention of stepping away from the limelight anytime soon.

A source said the couple were "happy to be back" in the UK, and their "focus" remained on getting their children Archie, seven, and Lilibet, five, settled into school.

The Sussexes are back in Britain

IAN VOGLER

Kate visits hospital that treated her cancer

The Princess of Wales spoke about the "trials and tribulations of medical treatments" as she visited the hospital where she received chemotherapy in 2024 (Kate Mansey writes).

Kate, 44, was welcomed back to the Royal Marsden hospital in Chelsea where she visited staff and patients, telling them that the holistic care she received at the hospital "made a big difference to me".

The princess completed the National Three Peaks Challenge in June, climbing the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales within 24 hours. Her aim was to raise awareness, and an undisclosed sum, for the holistic care and support at the Royal Marsden Cancer Charity. Funds will go towards a new holistic site, which helps people heal, recover and live beyond a diagnosis.

Visiting the site where the money will be spent, Kate said: "This is my small way of being able to give back and say thank you to you. I had incredible care here and support from a huge team and I'm really really grateful on a personal level.

"But also the holistic care, the treatments and therapeutic support on the outside is so important. It makes a big difference, the impact of nature, the impact of good nutrition, good ongoing support around you when it's really difficult to manage the trials and tribulations of medical treatments ... it makes a big difference.

"It made a big difference to me and it made a huge difference to lots of patients who I've spoken to. Thank you and well done."

The princess heard about plans for a new Centre for Holistic Wellbeing and Recovery at the hospital and saw the site where it would be built. She told staff that the plans were "really exciting", adding: "I think it will be transformative not only for patients but for families too."

The Princess of Wales became joint patron of the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust last year alongside her husband, the Prince of Wales.

The princess thanked staff at the Royal Marsden in Chelsea and spent time with patients

Lotto
It could be you

MUST BE WON

£12 Million Jackpot

Tonight

Scan to play

Account Terms, Rules & Procedures apply.
Players must be 18+ and physically located in the UK/IOM.

Britain 'in greater peril than after 9/11'

Fiona Hamilton Chief Reporter

Britain faces greater danger now than it did after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the head of MI5 has warned.

Sir Ken McCallum, director-general of the Security Service, said the UK faced not only mass-casualty ambitions from terrorists, but also the threat posed by hostile states.

McCallum, who issued the stark warning on the 25th anniversary of the al-Qaeda attack in which almost 3,000 people died, said "we now face the worst of both worlds".

"The MI5 I lead in 2026 contends with a threat landscape markedly different to 2001's," he wrote in the Independent. "Sadly, mass-casualty terrorist ambition endures, as in the recent conviction of an Islamist extremist who sought automatic weaponry for an assault on Manchester's Jewish community. But the terrorist threat now sits alongside strategic national security threats posed by capable states.

"In the aftermath of the Cold War, CIA director James Woolsey spoke of the West having 'slain a large dragon' but facing a 'bewildering variety of poisonous snakes' ... we now face the worst of both worlds: dragons are back, but snakes persist."

During his tenure McCallum has repeatedly warned of the threat posed by hostile states, namely China, Russia and Iran. Last October, he said that Beijing represented a national security threat on a daily basis. He added that Russia's hostile intent was unwavering and Iran had backed more than 20 potentially lethal plots in a year alone.

Yesterday he detailed how the security services had learnt from 9/11 and other Islamist attacks, but cautioned that the next major event might be unexpected. McCallum said the authorities "must beware of preparing brilliantly to fight yesterday's enemy, using yesterday's methods, against yesterday's target." He added: "Our adversaries do not offer us that luxury. They adapt because we adapt, and vice versa. The uncomfortable truth is that the next strategic shock may already be taking shape somewhere we are not yet looking."

Sir Ken McCallum said the terrorist threat now sat alongside the dangers from hostile states

The 9/11 attacks, masterminded by Osama bin Laden, heralded an era of Islamist bombing campaigns, including the 2005 London suicide bombings in which 52 people were killed. There have also been thwarted plots such as the 2006 attempt to blow up aircraft flying from the UK to the US using liquid explosive disguised as soft drinks.

Since then, the terror picture has shifted markedly. Security agencies acknowledge that terrorists still hold mass-casualty ambitions, but groups such as Islamic State have successfully urged so-called lone wolves to carry out attacks themselves.

McCallum, who was appointed director-general in 2020 and has spent more than 25 years in the service, said he was "proud" of the work MI5 did in disrupting al-Qaeda after 9/11. He noted the "relentless adaptation" central to that response, which remains pivotal for "still more complex" challenges in the 2020s.

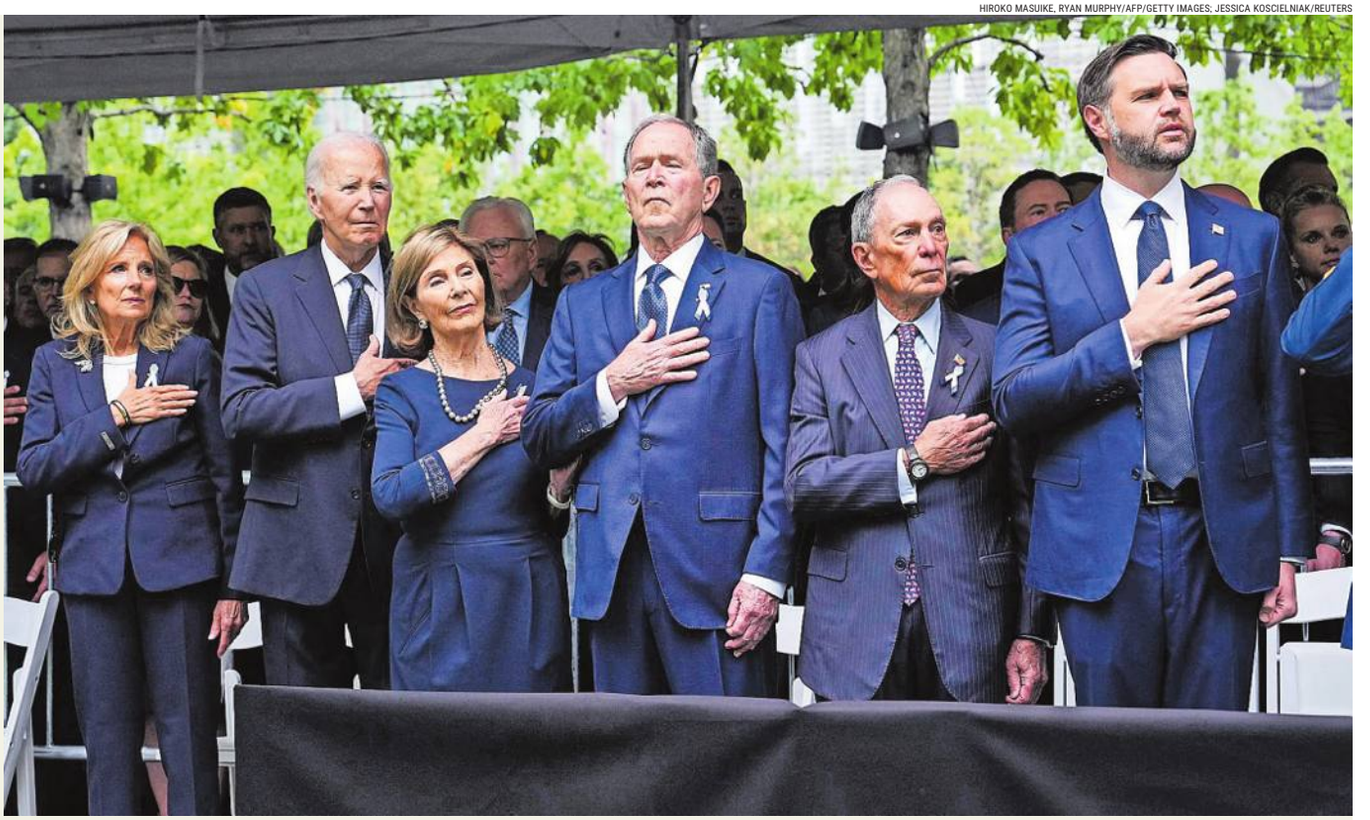
McCallum said it was for others to judge the post-9/11 coalition action in Afghanistan, led by US and UK forces, but added that foreign policy was "harder than many commentators allow". He said: "It is said that we all remember where we were on 9/11. It's certainly true in my case: working in an MI5 operational team countering terrorism. Someone had switched on a television following news of a plane hitting the twin towers. As the second airliner struck, one of my colleagues softly said, 'Osama bin Laden.' Then, 'I guess none of us leaves MI5 for at least a decade.' And so it proved."

Looking to modern threats, McCallum spoke about the recent attacks on synagogues in the UK and how many of the "assets, systems and services under threat" are now owned by the private sector, rather than by nations.

He added: "The horrors of 9/11 will never leave me. What sits with me every day, 25 years on, is MI5's perpetual responsibility to keep adapting, at even greater pace, as we seek to deepen the UK's resilience — now to both dragons and snakes."

HIROKO MASUIKE, RYAN MURPHY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; JESSICA KOSCIELNIAK/REUTERS

Former presidents united in grief



The New York sky was dull and grey, not the brilliant blue it was on September 11, 2001 (Josie Ensor and George Grylls write).

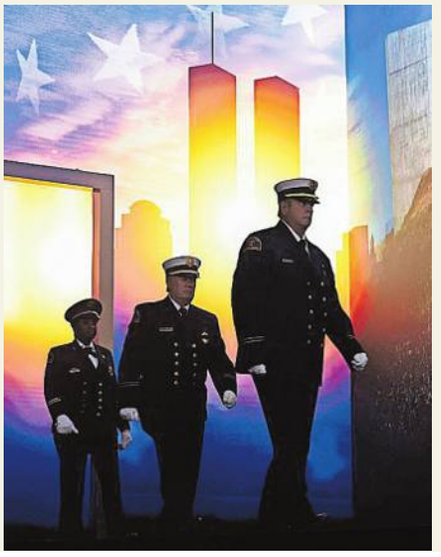
For some of the families of the victims of the 9/11 attacks, the overcast sky came as a relief, not just from the early autumn heat, but from the painful reminder of the clear morning on which 2,977 people were killed.

As it does every year on this day for the past 25 years, Ground Zero stood for a series of one-minute silences for those who lost their lives in the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil.

In attendance were all the living ex-presidents: Bill Clinton, George Bush, Barack Obama and Joe Biden. JD Vance, the vice-president, was present too. There was, however, one notable absence.

President Trump attended a memorial at the Pentagon, a break from the tradition of presidents commemorating significant milestones at all three remembrance sites: Ground Zero in lower Manhattan where 2,753 civilians died; Shanksville in Pennsylvania where 40 passengers of Flight United 93 lost their lives; and the Pentagon in Virginia where 184 people died.

Trump was reported to have snubbed the commemoration in New York after learning that organisers would not let him speak, which he denied.



The president used his speech at the Pentagon to mount a defence of the war in Iran. "We will never ever forget. That's why we fight today," he said. "The Islamic Republic of Iran will never ever have a nuclear weapon."

Pete Hegseth, the secretary of war, said the US was still sending "terrorists to hell where they belong" and praised Trump for "laying waste" to Iran.

Deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11, Hegseth said although "imperfect" the War on Terror was the country's "retribution". In a shift from previous anniversaries of 9/11, this year's commemorations were tinged with politics.

Condoleezza Rice, the former secretary of state, reminded Trump how America's allies responded to the assault.

"Nato for the first time in its history under Article 5 declared that an attack upon one is an attack upon all," she said at the Pentagon ceremony. "In Canada, ordinary citizens took in stranded travellers, strangers, they took them into their homes for days at a time."

Jill and Joe Biden, Laura and George Bush, Michael Bloomberg, a former mayor of New York, and JD Vance were among those at Ground Zero; an honour guard at the Republican convention in Dallas; and Tribute in Light, a public art installation in New York

In a charged moment at Ground Zero, Zohran Mamdani, the Democratic mayor of New York, shook hands with Rudy Giuliani, the Republican who led the city at the time of the 2001 terrorist attacks. Only days before, Giuliani had said that the attendance of New York City's first Muslim mayor "offends me".

Families of the victims had collected more than 100,000 signatures on a petition calling for Mamdani to be excluded from the memorial, but the mayor said he wanted to remember and honour the victims.

WINNER
IWC INDUSTRY
Wine
AWARDS 2026
SUPERMARKET OF THE YEAR
Wine Supermarket of the Year
We'll toast to that
TESCO
Every little helps
bedrinkaware.co.uk 18+

Theatre where Stoppard liked to be peeping Tom

David Sanderson Arts Correspondent

Britain's greatest modern playwright was, it can be revealed, a bit of a Peeping Tom at the West End theatre that now bears his name.

Sir Tom Stoppard, whose name now adorns the former Duke of York's theatre, used to love the playhouse's vantage point overlooking the bedrooms of the St Martin's Lane hotel.

Sonia Friedman, who produced many of Stoppard's plays and was the driving force behind the playhouse name change, said the writer would often join her on the top floor of the theatre where she used to have her offices. He would often appear downstairs, Friedman told an event on Thursday at the theatre celebrating the name change, and the pair would "smoke, drink coffee and gossip".

"But the thing he most loved about this theatre is that my office overlooks the St Martin's Hotel," Friedman told the event attended by Stoppard's widow, Sabrina Guinness, his sons and many theatre luminaries.

"And he would ask to be told when there was bonking happening. A call went around my office: "Room 14". Tom would sometimes be there and would enjoy that very much," Friedman said to laughter from those assembled.

Stoppard is, of course, better known for his insights into the human condition and two of his plays were first brought to the West End at the then Duke of York's theatre.

Sir Tom Stoppard spied on couples at the St Martin's Lane hotel, left, from the Duke of York's theatre, now named after him, said his producer

His son Ed Stoppard said the theatre was "one of his absolute favourites" adding: "Dad would have been deeply honoured and humbled by this great tribute to his life's work. Undoubtedly he would have been self-deprecating and modest, and at the same time absolutely tickled pink."

Friedman, who also instigated the changing of the Comedy Theatre to the Harold Pinter in 2011, first contacted the owners of the Duke of York following Stoppard's death aged 88 last November. Michael Lynas, a senior executive with ATG Entertainment, which owns the theatre, said it was "wonderful" it had been renamed and praised the "indefatigable" Friedman. The playhouse was first known as the Trafalgar Square theatre, then the Trafalgar before in 1895 being named after the Duke of York who became George V.

Stoppard, who was knighted in 1997 and appointed to the Order of Merit in 2000, left behind an enormous body of work including 20 individual plays, 11 radio plays and five television plays. He won an Oscar in 1999 for his scripting of *Shakespeare in Love*.

Friedman said that Guinness was establishing a bursary to allow the couple's Hampshire cottage to be given to a "young emerging playwright" each year for the "precious gift of time in which to work".

At least they will know there will be nobody peeping at the window.

PHIL WILKINSON

Already hooked Rory Maxwell enjoys his first Kelso Ram Sales yesterday. More than 4,000 sheep went under the hammer at the largest sale of its kind in Europe

News

Village's brush with men in black

Police face far-right protests again today. They failed to act on tip-offs from rural Kent, writes **Emma Yeomans**

STUART BROCK

Patriot Platform activists closed down Dover port before blocking migrants in Portsmouth. The group is led by Daniel Thomas, below confronting Reform's Zia Yusuf

On a peaceful September day, the loudest noise in Preston-next-Wingham is the squabbling of gulls following a tractor around the fields.

So it came as quite a shock to the sleepy parish when hundreds of balaclava-clad activists led by the organisation Patriot Platform descended on the village, turning it into a staging post for an aggressive demonstration that closed down Dover port and caused miles of traffic across Kent.

Kent police were caught off-guard by what they described at the time as a "spontaneous" protest. However, locals in Preston said they warned the force that a well-organised group were mobilising in their village and preparing to descend on the port.

The force has now admitted it was tipped off the day before — but the information was "not fully assessed".

Police are preparing for fresh far-right protests across the south coast on Saturday. The biggest protest is expected in Portsmouth from lunchtime, with officers from across Hampshire on standby to be deployed to the city if extra resources are needed.

A group called the South Coast Patriots, which is closely linked to the far-right activists Tommy Robinson and Daniel Thomas, is promoting a "peaceful march" starting from All Saints Church in Portsmouth. Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, wrote on X: "All south coast patriot groups are uniting this Saturday in Portsmouth to march on the city. If you can get there, get there. Strength in numbers."

Protesters who attend wearing a face covering could be arrested under new policing powers, Hampshire Police has said. Under the Crime and Policing Act 2026, police can impose a ban on face coverings for 24 hours. The powers have only been used on one previous occasion when the Metropolitan Police imposed a ban on face coverings on August 29 to deal with a counter-protest by anti-fascist "anti-fa" activists targeting a Ukip protest in central London.

A YouGov poll has found that 68 per cent of Britons support the police in using these powers, with only 20 per cent opposed and 11 per cent unsure. Reform UK voters are more likely than others to oppose a ban on face coverings.

Police forces across the south coast of England are preparing for potential protests to be held at various other locations, with intelligence suggesting impromptu demonstrations could be held. While they are expected to be smaller in size than the Portsmouth protest, policing sources said they are "much better prepared" than last weekend to respond to any situation that might trigger a flashpoint.

On Thursday, Shabana Mahmood, the home secretary, urged police officers from across the south of England to ensure they are better prepared than last weekend and to use the powers.

The first sign of trouble in Preston came last Friday evening, when large numbers of cars began arriving and parking in the village. Stephen Atherton, who works at Preston Family Butchers, said hundreds of men had left their cars, including blocking the forecourt of the butchers. Preston was chosen, The Times understands, thanks to a local engineering business the activists used to camp overnight.

Atherton said that after parking in the village, the protesters assembled at Preston Mill Engineering, where they piled into unmarked vans bound for Dover. "They had got all the details off the vans, and they didn't want the cars down in Dover. They were polite and apologised when they came to pick the cars up, but it still caused the village a lot of inconvenience."

Patriot Platform, which describes itself as a "Christian patriot army", is led by Daniel Thomas, an anti-migrant activist who was previously convicted for attempted kidnapping. Thomas — who goes by the moniker "Danny Tommo" — livestreams protests on YouTube.

On Sunday, balaclava-clad men appeared again in Portsmouth, after news spread that a boat carrying migrants had been intercepted in the western Channel and would be brought ashore in Portsmouth for processing.

Thomas and a large group of activists blocked off a beach and peninsula, where migrants were waiting on coaches to be taken to Home Office processing facilities. Thomas stood in the sea and threatened to "go under the water" if arrested, while others were filmed shouting at and splashing Royal National Lifeboat Institution volunteers who were monitoring them.

Police said yesterday that a 42-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of violent disorder and assaulting a constable in the execution of their duty. The man, who was still in custody, is the first person to be held over the protest.

One resident in Preston, who asked not to be named, said he thought the protesters' concerns about immigration were legitimate, but "once you put that mask on, you've lost the argument". "Police ceded control of the streets," he said. "Masked men in all black — that's pretty much Nazism. If you are so proud to be British, why would you cover your face?

"This is Preston. Where next?"

RNLI's humane agenda, letters, page 34
The town on the front line of migrant protests, Saturday essay, pages 38-39

Asylum seeker 'saw boy leap from hotel's sixth floor'

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

When Malika became pregnant with twins, she hoped the Home Office would make plans to move her family out of the cramped hotel room she shared with her husband and daughter.

But after the birth, the family of five were moved to an even smaller room. That was their lot for three years, living in spaces barely big enough for two.

"It had only one bed for all of us," Malika said as she described what life was like after claiming asylum.

"I saw my children not being able to move around or play and they constantly had to be in the same space where I was cooking. Imagine newborn babies in that space."

It was a 19-storey hotel with many families, some larger than Malika's. "They had even more difficulties than I did," she said. Some women were giving birth inside their hotel rooms with no support. "It was the worst experience."

When she was pregnant she saw a boy jump from the sixth floor.

"That happened in front of me; it was so traumatising. There were cases of stabbing, constant fighting. I didn't feel safe for my children for the three years we were there."

It was certainly not the image of Britain that Malika and her husband had when they fled their home in central Africa. They asked for their country not to be disclosed because they live in fear of political persecution.

The family's experience is one shared by many of the families who make up more than a third of all asylum seekers living in hotels, which politicians of all stripes, refugee charities and the Home Office itself accept are unsuitable for long-term living. Their use was intended only to be temporary, having begun in 2020 as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. But numbers rose to more than 56,000 in 400 hotels as the UK received record numbers of asylum claims, many from small boat arrivals.

At the end of March this year there were 2,997 asylum-seeking children living in hotels and 4,281 women, according to Home Office figures obtained under a freedom of information request — 35 per cent of all 20,879 migrants in hotels. While this had dipped to 16,021 by the end of June, the proportion of families remains roughly the same.

Miguel, his wife and two children have been waiting to hear the outcome of their asylum claim for seven years, one of which they spent in hotels across Sheffield. Four years in, they heard that their claim had been rejected because their home country in South America, which Miguel asked not to disclose, was safe to return to. They appealed and are waiting for a response, all while living in taxpayer-funded accommodation.

Miguel, who has been supported by the Refugee Council, tried to make life as normal as possible for his son and daughter, but said it was difficult, not least because the Home Office moved them to a different hotel at short notice.

The room in London occupied by a couple with twins and another child

Miguel said: "It took an hour and 30 minutes to and from school each day on the bus. It was expensive and we don't have money." He added: "My children asked me, 'Why don't we live like normal people?'" They were moved to their own home after Miguel's wife was diagnosed with breast cancer.

A report by the Helen Bamber Foundation, a charity that works with survivors of trafficking and torture, revealed the dire conditions some are forced to endure, including one hotel rife with rats and another in which migrants were racially abused by staff.

Imran Hussain from the Refugee Council said: "We work with families who have been stuck in a single room for months on end, without facilities to cook or proper space for children to study or play, all at huge cost to the public purse.

"These hotels are a symbol of a system that is not working, and they remain in use because of slow and often poor-quality decision-making on asylum applications."

Names have been changed

Supermarket tins of mackerel don't contain any

Ben Cooke Environment Correspondent

Most tinned "mackerel" sold in Britain contains no real mackerel after supermarkets switched to a less nutritious species with a similar name.

Lidl, Aldi, and the Tesco and Sainsbury's supplier Princes have switched to stocking tins of Chilean jack mackerel, a species that, despite its name, belongs to an entirely different fish family. Waitrose, meanwhile, has stopped selling fresh mackerel and is running down its stocks of tins.

Supermarkets have made the switch after years of mackerel quotas being set higher than scientific advice, causing numbers in the northeast Atlantic to fall by 77 per cent since 2015. The Marine Stewardship Council has stopped certifying the species, meaning it no longer complies with many retailers' sustainability policies.

Jamie Oliver has encouraged shoppers to embrace jack mackerel, extolling its "flaky, meaty, delicious" taste and texture. But the species has been greeted less enthusiastically by tinned-fish aficionados. It contains only about half as much omega-3 fatty acid and only about a third as much vitamin b12, which helps the body to produce blood cells that carry oxygen around the body. It is, however, a slightly better source of protein, providing about four more grams per 100g than true mackerel.

Jamie Dutton, of the Facebook group the Tinned Fish Appreciation Society, described it as the "toughest, driest thing I've ever had", adding that it was "like cold roast beef on Boxing Day".

Chris Graham, head of ocean regeneration and sustainable seafood at the Marine Conservation Society, told The Times that jack mackerel was a "more sustainable choice" than true mackerel, adding that its population was "currently in a much healthier position".

He added: "The best approach for retailers is to diversify their sourcing across a range of well-managed species and stocks, rather than becoming heavily dependent on a single alternative."

Jack mackerel comes from the fish family Carangidae, whereas true mackerel comes from the Scombridae family. Until December last year, the replacement species could only be marketed in Britain as "jack", "horse mackerel" or "scad", but not as "jack mackerel".

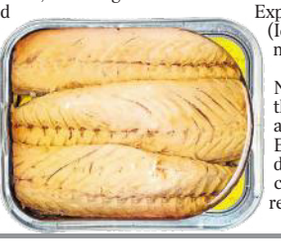
But weeks after Princes launched its new product under the name "jack mackerel", the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs changed its rules to allow the name.

While jack mackerel costs only a third of the price of Atlantic true mackerel, supermarkets have launched their new products at similar prices to their old. In Tesco, a tin of Princes jack mackerel costs £1.75, only 20p less than a tin of Princes' true mackerel.

Princes, which clearly labels its products as jack mackerel, said it "took the decision to move its branded range away from northeast Atlantic mackerel following years of concern over unsustainable catch levels".

"We chose MSC-certified Chilean jack mackerel as an independently certified sustainable alternative, following extensive product and consumer testing."

The UK, Iceland, Greenland, Norway, the Faroe Islands, the EU and Russia have been involved in a years-long dispute over quotas, known as the "mackerel war". Between 2020 and 2024 the quotas for the fish agreed between these countries were on average 39 per cent higher than advised by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (Ices), an intergovernmental body.



Tins of "mackerel" use a cheaper, less nutritious species

Last year the UK, Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands agreed, without the EU and Russia, to reduce catches by 72 per cent, in line with Ices recommendations.

TMS

diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

Burnham stays away

Andy Burnham was conspicuously absent from the 9/11 memorial service at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park yesterday, opting instead to stay at No 10 North and send a video message.

Across the Atlantic, all the living former US presidents joined grieving families and military personnel at Ground Zero. Yet despite Burnham's routine of working remotely on Fridays, no exception was carved out to sit alongside relatives and friends of those who were lost. Nor was the PM, below, anywhere in sight at Thursday's US Embassy memorial service, where Baroness May, Lord Khan of Tooting and Kemi Badenoch gathered.

Reflecting on the strength of the alliance, US ambassador Warren Stephens reminded guests "that there is nothing, on earth, of greater value than a friend". Given he had missed Thursday's service, the PM's decision only to send a video message the following day felt like a failure to honour the solemnity of the occasion.

LORD OF THE RED TAPE

Reindustrialisation minister Blair McDougall is taking a Tolkienesque approach to rebuilding British economic power. Appearing before the business and trade select committee to explain how the government plans to clear procurement bottlenecks, McDougall admitted structural reform wasn't always enough. Sometimes, he explained, civil servants need an "Eye of Sauron" approach to fixing problem areas. The all-seeing villain of the *Lord of the Rings* seems an odd model for Whitehall. Then again, Mordor did boast a booming heavy industry.

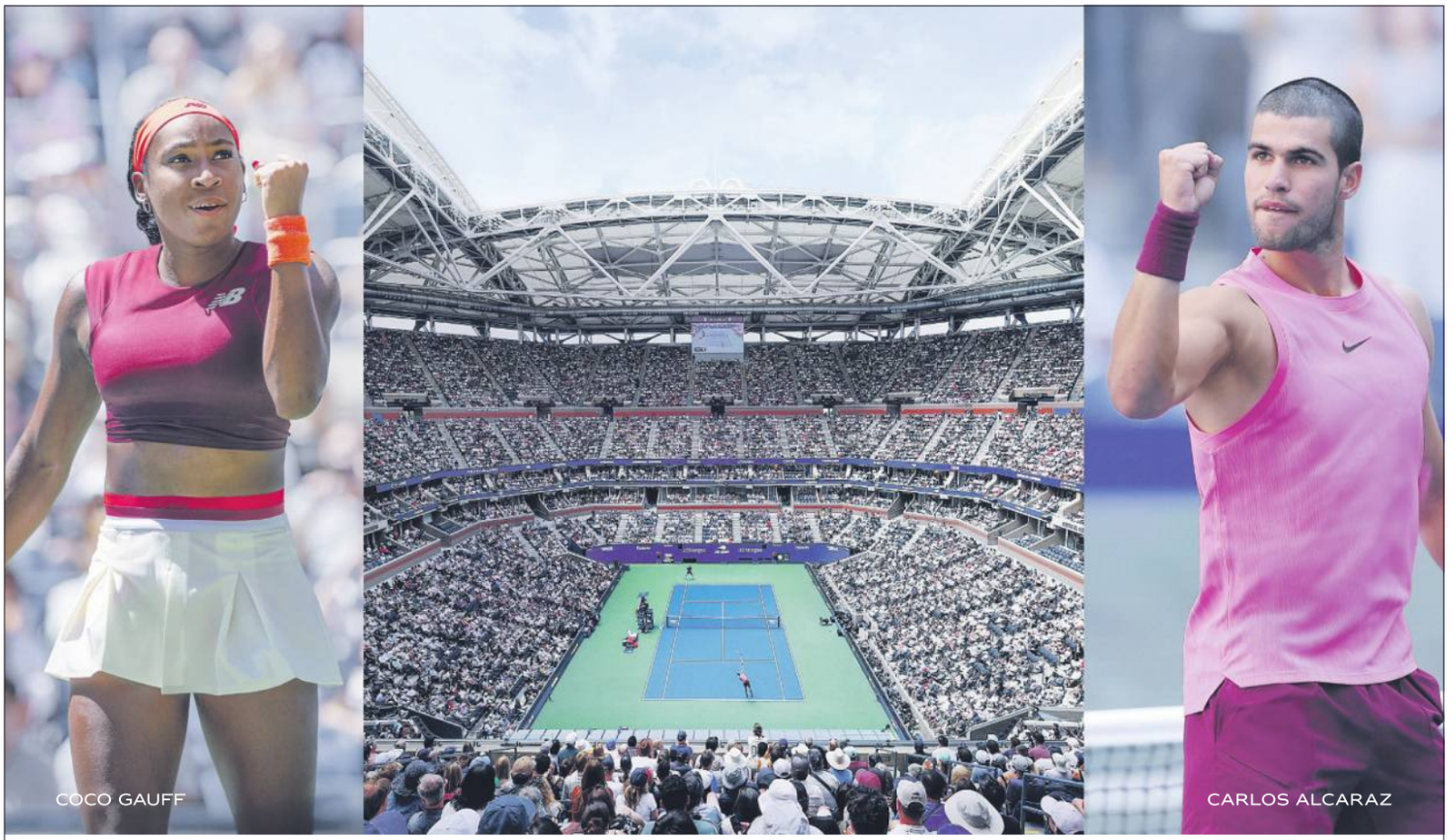
Matt Groening named The Simpsons after his own family, which "kind of wrecked their lives." But his father, Homer, was remarkably selective in his outrage. "My dad loved The Simpsons except when Homer was mean to Marge," Groening recalled on Conan O'Brien's podcast. "There was an episode in which the Simpsons' car breaks down ... and while the family is sitting under the shade of a big boulder Marge has to carry a tyre back to town. My dad was so mad that Homer made Marge carry the tyre." When Groening pointed out that Homer regularly strangles his son Bart, his father replied: "I don't care about that."

PUDDING ON THE FITZ

Central London's council busybodies take a dim view of alfresco dining, but Yotam Ottolenghi remains undeterred. Celebrating the launch of his latest book *Simple Too* at Rovi in Fitzrovia, the chef defied red tape by wheeling a trolley on to the pavement to feed delighted passers-by brown sugar cake with sumac roasted strawberries — boldly risking a ticking off for illegal dessert distribution.

Thirty years after The English Patient, *actors Ralph Fiennes and Kristin Scott Thomas met at the Ciné Lumière in London to swap stories about the late, exacting director Anthony Minghella. Fiennes recalled being granted creative freedom — up to a point. After one rehearsal, a speechless Minghella intervened: "You're saying the line in a way I never would have expected. Could you do it again, the way I imagined?" Scott Thomas was much less accommodating. Ordered to trace "Love" in the sand, she rebelled. "I can't do that; it's poor taste." "Eventually," she said, "he realised I was right." Well, at least she drew a line in the sand.*

ED HALFORD



REACH FOR THE CROWN

THE GMT-MASTER II

us open®

US OPEN TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS
USTA BILLIE JEAN KING
NATIONAL TENNIS CENTER, NEW YORK
30 AUGUST TO 13 SEPTEMBER 2026

ROLEX

SEBASTIEN NOGIER/EPA

Arthur Brand with Picasso's Dora Maar, which was stolen in 1999 and which he helped find. Young Woman at the Well and Portrait of Madame Colonna Romano were taken from Renoir's former home in Cagnes-Sur-Mer, which is now a museum

Indiana Jones of art world on crusade to find stolen Renoirs

After two masterpieces were taken in France, an expert helping police tells **Will Pavia** the plot was not the cleverest

On Tuesday morning, the Dutchman known as Holland's answer to Indiana Jones was at home when his phone rang. It was the police, calling about the Renoirs.

Two of them had been stolen that morning from a museum in the south of France. "I work very closely with the Dutch police," said Arthur Brand. "They always call me when there is a major theft. They said, 'Arthur, did you hear this?'"

The officer gave him the details: the thieves had broken into the former home of Pierre-Auguste Renoir in Cagnes-Sur-Mer, which is now a museum. An alarm sounded and the police were there in minutes but the thieves escaped with two Renoirs worth about £7.7 million.

It was not necessarily a matter for the Dutch police. "But art theft is very international," said Brand. "If something happens in France, it doesn't necessarily stay in France."

The officer "wanted to brainstorm about it," said Brand. "Who could it be? Could it be people from the Netherlands? Could it be a known group?"

Brand, 56, has been investigating art thefts for 20 years. He has recovered a Picasso lifted from the yacht of a Saudi sheikh, stolen paintings by Vincent van Gogh and Salvador Dali and a ring that belonged to Oscar Wilde. Such is his reputation now that stolen paintings sometimes appear at his front door, dropped off by people reluctant to answer too many questions.

The Renoir thieves are probably locals, or hail from not much more than 60 miles from Cagnes-sur-Mer, he said. "These were professionals. They got in and out in four minutes ... but stealing a painting is not the brightest idea because it's hard to get rid of," he said. "Once the painting leaves the museum (in the arms of a thief) it's worth nothing. It's worth six years in jail."

Often, when a painting is taken, there will be suggestions that it was "stolen to order". "This is a popular belief," said Brand. "[But] I've never had one case in which it was ordered."

The other idea is that there are "rich villains who buy stolen art," said Brand. It can be traced, in his view, to a James Bond film. In 1961 Francisco Goya's *Portrait of the Duke of Wellington* was stolen from the National Gallery. The writers of the 1962 film *Dr No* had 007 spotting the Goya when he goes for dinner in the supervillain's underground lair. "That has inspired a lot of thieves to think, 'We steal a painting worth £10 million and we sell it for £5 million to a secretive collector.' But they don't exist," said Brand. "No one is going to buy a stolen painting. You can't show it to your friends, you can't leave it to your children."

The other great inspiration, for thieves all over Europe, was last year's theft from the Louvre of some of the last crown jewels of France, worth an estimated £75 million. "When I heard the Louvre was robbed I thought, oh my god, now it begins," said Brand. "You must understand thieves all around the world were watching this... They thought, 'Banks these days have less cash and a lot of security. Apparently museums are vulnerable'."

The next theft came hours later: 2,000 gold and silver coins said to be worth about £78,000 were stolen from a a museum in northeastern France. A Renoir, a Cezanne and a Matisse were taken from an Italian museum in March and recovered in August; that month four paintings by a Renaissance master were stolen from a museum in Sicily.

The two Renoirs stolen from the artist's house in Cagnes-Sur-Mer are *Young Woman at the Well*, an unfinished work, and *Portrait of Madame Colonna Romano*, a French actress. "Often these paintings will disappear into the criminal world," said Brand.

They are used as collateral, or as part of larger payments, he said. "Suppose there is a drug deal, one group owes the other £5 million but they have £4 million, they put in the stolen painting."

Brand grew up in Deventer, east of Amsterdam, with an interest in archaeology, art and crime. In the 2000s he wrote to Michel van Rijn, a former Dutch art smuggler based in London who had begun working with Scotland Yard. "He invited me over to London," said Brand. "He introduced me to Scotland Yard and the FBI. Also to thieves and to middlemen."

Brand became an art consultant, advising art buyers, while pursuing his real interest, tracking down stolen art works. It is an interesting life.

"You talk with a lot of informants, criminals, and you work very closely with police forces all around Europe, so they become friends," he said. He suspects it would be a problem if he ever gets married. "I would have to do two parties because you cannot invite all these people together."

He does not usually think of himself as Indiana Jones; he does not even have a driving licence. "I'm just average. I just drive my bicycle, chasing these art thieves who drive these Porsches," he said. "The best informants are the ex-girlfriends or the ex-wives."

Future of al fresco dining on London's 'vibiest street' in doubt

Lucy Kenningham

The future of al fresco dining on one of London's buzziest streets is under threat after a council crackdown, with traders told to remove vast swathes of seating or face a fine.

Exmouth Market in Clerkenwell has become one of the capital's liveliest nightlife spots and one of the few areas in the capital in which outside drinking and dining has continued post-pandemic.

Garath Kerr, who owns Café Kick, a bar on the street, said that al fresco terraces had been governed by a "five-year gentlemen's agreement" with the council during Covid. Kerr says this is precisely what spawned the street's subsequent success.

"During Covid we came to an agreement with Islington council to have tables and chairs in front of our bars and restaurants along with other shops (with those shops' permission) to help us trade through a very difficult Covid period. Exmouth Market flourished and turned into this beautiful continental mecca that is now a world-famous destination," he said.

But on the very same day the street was named the capital's "vibiest street" by TimeOut, the going-out guide, officers told traders to remove their outside tables or face an £800 fine.

Officers returned after their initial visit to advise traders on applying for pavement licences. Bars and restaurants will now have to increase the space between tables and their placement will be more proscribed.

Traders estimate that it will amount to around a 40 per cent cut in the number of outside tables and chairs, with bars and restaurants required to leave a two-metre gap between their tables and the pavement — currently the gap requires 0.8 metres between tables.

"To take away 40 per cent of your trade overnight or with only a two-week grace period puts many of these small businesses in real danger of insolvency," Kerr says. "Instead of starting with enforcement the council should start with dialogue. This isn't McDonald's."

In late August, the Exmouth Market traders voluntarily adhered to the council's new, tighter restrictions for an evening and the result, they claim, was a ghost town. "The vibe was completely dead," says Kerr.

Islington council said: "We continue to engage very closely with businesses in Exmouth Market. We are seeking to hold an initial meeting in the coming weeks to support businesses in establishing a formal traders' association to provide a structured channel for engagement going forward."

The council also told local newspaper the Islington Tribune, which first reported the crackdown, that traders were "free to apply for a licence".

News

The Flexjet terminal at Farnborough includes a seating area that replicates a Gulfstream interior, as shown off by Tracy Hain, its designer

Sad buffets and grubby loos? Not at private jet lounge

With opulent interiors, silver service and a top-end price tag, flying in a private jet is widely considered to be the height of luxury (Laurence Sleator writes). But there is one aspect where the high standards passengers have come to expect are apparently not being met: the lounge.

"Most of these lounges, if you can call them that, even for the most luxurious private enterprises are like a gas station. They're almost worse than a commercial airport," Tracy Hain said. To rectify this, the interior designer worked with America's Flexjet to create a private jet terminal at Farnborough airport in Hampshire.

The single-operator, £25 million two-storey centre, which covers more than 2,000 square metres, is the first of its kind in Europe. Bosses say the investment represents a huge show of confidence in the UK's private jet industry.

Hain said: "Everyone's upping their game. We are creating the standard for a new experience of private travel."

Rather than simply be chauffeured to the terminal, walking through security and stepping on to their flight, Flexjet hopes the terminal will become a hub for private travellers around the world.

"They're going to come early, they're going to sit at the bar and have a martini, they're going to stare at the beautiful sculpture and they're going to relax and think, 'Actually, I might even have my meeting in there and not bother with the traffic going into London,'" Hain said.

Inside, the terminal has views of the airfield and a private boardroom with a large screen

O2

The ultimate Pro iPhone
Pre-order from £63.49 a month
Unlimited data | 48m device plan | £30 upfront
Total device cost £1,301.34. Increases to £65.99 Apr 27 and £68.49 Apr 28

14-day cooling off & other cancellation rights apply
Free delivery standard, premium £9.99

Search O2 iPhone

O2 Satellite
At no extra cost

Trade in your old device with O2 Recycle and claim up to £580 trade-in value. Value based on payable amount on all traded in devices between July 2026 and August 2026. Ends 14/10. £26.49 48-month Device Plan and £37 48-month monthly rolling Airtime Plan (de-links after 24-months) with unlimited data. £30 upfront device cost. Data allowances must be used within the month and cannot be carried over, unless eligible for data rollover. Subject to availability. Direct purchases only. Pay the cash price for your device or spread the cost over 3 to 36 months (excludes dongles). Certain device costs available to be spread over 3 to 48 months. The device cost will be the same whatever you choose. There may be an upfront cost. You can pay off your Device Plan at any time and choose to keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade it, or leave. If you are in the first 24 months of your Device Plan and you cancel your Airtime Plan you will have to pay the remainder of your Device Plan in full. After 24 months you can keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade it, or end it without affecting your Device Plan. Devices subject to availability. 0% APR. Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+. Direct Debit. Credit provided by Telefonica UK Ltd, RG2 6UU. Telefonica UK is authorised and regulated by the FCA for consumer credit and insurance. Terms apply, see o2.co.uk/terms. No cost for device plan term (on Classic & Plus Plans). Offer on iPhone 18 devices only, ends 28/10. Other compatible Apple, Samsung and Google devices £3pm (included on Ultimate Plan as standard). 30-day rolling term. Device, app, location restrictions (minimal service in NI) & other terms apply. See o2.co.uk/satellite

Converted mill that is building a fortune from old Lego blocks

A Lancashire firm has invented a contraption that sorts mixed-up bricks into new sets to buy, writes **Sian Bradley**

Lego bricks of all shapes and sizes shuffle along a V-shaped conveyor belt before jets of air blow them into one of 50 metal containers. The scene would not look out of place in a pie factory.

In reality, this custom-built machine sorts mixed-up bricks into complete sets. The sorting machine is called "Brick-o-Matic" and is the brainchild of WeBuyBricks, which aims to capitalise on Lego's gold rush at their converted mill in Lancashire.

Lego generated £9 billion last year, fuelled by demand for high-profile franchises such as Star Wars and Harry Potter. A limited-edition set may sell out fast, only to command double the price when resold on a cut-throat secondary market.

Many sets are destined to end up mixed in with the rest of their owner's collection, begging the question of how to go about recycling them when the list of parts and instruction manual were thrown out long ago.

WeBuyBricks sources its inventory, currently standing at 14 tonnes of bricks, directly from the public through an online buy-and-sell marketplace.

Mike Lane, the founder, had witnessed the success of secondary markets, having previously co-founded WeBuyBooks. He also knew the Lego he played with as a child didn't lose value.

Lane invested more than £2.5 million in this new venture; over £1 million for the brick-o-matic machine and £1.5 million for restoring Hall Carr Mill in Rossendale, built in about 1830, which had lain derelict since closing as a slipper factory in 1997. He also developed artificial intelligence with Stirling University's advanced engineering and robotics company, Peacock Technology. The goal was to take the Lego bricks that would end up in landfill and sort them back into the popular sets, but at an affordable price.

"The machine sorts Lego into its original sets. You try sorting that out

Mike Lane, the founder of WeBuyBricks, and Brad Hacking, the company's head

VAGNER VIDAL FOR THE TIMES

capable of hosting conference calls. It can double up as a private hosting area with food made to order.

A U-shaped bar provides the centrepiece, and one of the seating areas is a replica of the cabin of a Gulfstream G700 jet — the company's premier aircraft — which includes a lie-flat bed to allow a brief nap.

Upstairs is the "ocular", the circular control centre where Flexjet staff monitor its fleet of about 340 jets and update the profiles of every customer to ensure their travel demands are met, from how chatty they want the crew to be to how they like their bed made.

A space for a finishing school for prospective cabin crew allows staff to learn flower arranging, food plating, wine pairing and diplomatic skills, before taking an on-site exam.

Flexjet allows buyers to partially own a jet, giving them access to a certain number of flying hours every year. Buyers must also pay a monthly management fee and occupied hourly rate. Exact costs are kept under wraps.

Michael Silvestro, chief executive of Flexjet, said the investment in the terminal represented a "significant" show of confidence in the UK's private jet industry. He added: "London is infinitely important in so many different ways. It's the gateway city for anything east of the United States. If you want to be a worldwide player, this is where you need to be."

Man encouraged sex assaults

Jessica Sharkey
Crime Correspondent

A man involved in a global network of offenders drugging and abusing women has pleaded guilty to encouraging others to commit sexual offences.

Darren Conway, 52, of Enfield, north London, initially faced two charges of assisting or encouraging an offence, namely sharing an intimate photograph or film and sexual assault.

He eventually faced seven additional charges of assisting or encouraging sexual assault, as well as voyeurism and possessing an extreme pornographic image.

Conway pleaded guilty to all charges at Wood Green crown court yesterday.

He admitted messaging a man last year and asking him to remove a sleeping woman's clothing and then sexually touch her.

On at least ten occasions between March 2023 and June 2026, he solicited naked images of sleeping women. Conway also admitted one charge of voyeurism relating to the observing of sleeping women doing private acts.

The online forum was uncovered in October last year. This led to the establishment of a national co-ordination group led by the National Crime Agency. Intelligence was passed to individual police forces for investigations, the Metropolitan Police said. While conducting their investigation, another force shared further intelligence with the Met who identified Conway as one of the group chat members.

Darren Conway was involved in a global network

Messages found on his devices showed Conway encouraging other members to engage in drug-facilitated sexual offending, alongside images and videos of a sexual nature, police said.

Alexander Agbamu, for the prosecution, told the court: "The indictment reflects the defendant's involvement in an online forum which connects others who are involved in organised sexual offending and domestic abuse." He said the crimes seen on this forum involved "scores of other offenders".

Judge John Dodd remanded Conway in custody before his sentencing on October 30.

The Met said it was "actively investigating" reports into individuals believed to have committed, or encouraged others to engage in serious sexual offending against victims who were unconscious, asleep or otherwise stupefied. Officers are still trying to identify the victims in the footage on Conway's device. The force said that while most of the offending was believed to have taken place in the UK, it was also possible that some of the victims were based overseas.

Device	Duration Of Device Plan	Upfront Cost	Monthly Device Payment	Credit Amount	Total Amount Payable For Device	Interest Rate	Representative Apr	Cash Price	Air Time Plan	Airtime Plan April 2025 - March 2026	Airtime Plan April 2026 - March 2027	Total Monthly Price During Promo	Total Monthly Price During Promo April 27	Total Monthly Price During Promo April 28
IPhone 18 Pro	48 months	£30	£26.49	£1,271.34	£1,301.34	0%	0%	£1,301.34	£37	£39.50	£42	£63.49	£65.99	£68.49

JAMES SPEAKMAN

of projects, with some of the 14 tonnes of Lego bricks waiting to be processed

yourself," Lane said, while standing next to his machine. "Many pieces could be in the Dyson. Or the dog."

Brad Hacking, the company's head of projects, added that they are "proud that we can offer Lego at nearly 50 per cent off what you would buy new".

Inside the mill, 14 tonnes of loose Lego waits to be processed. Bricks are scanned for unwanted metal and then logged into a database. More than 55,000 brick types have been mapped so far out of roughly 80,000. They are identified by one machine, before loading on to the Brick-o-Matic — the name is a playful nod to Wallace and Gromit.

Once on the conveyor belt they are shaken to prevent bunching. It's a tactic borrowed directly from pie and cake packaging lines, Hacking said. Pieces pass an AI camera system that identifies each brick and precise bursts of compressed air fire them into corresponding chutes based on colour, piece type or set requirements. Non-genuine knockoffs, as well as bricks with bite-marks or sun damage are routed to an on-site granulator to be melted down.

Successfully sorted pieces are then washed in commercial machines with custom detergent ("We tried at least 30 to get the best one," Hacking said), and repackaged into spare secondary boxes. While averaging 40,000 bricks a day, Hacking said at two pieces a second, it can handle up to 100,000.

On Wednesday, Lego social media content creators gathered at the mill to see the machine in action. The creators have built a legion of fans between them through their Lego videos and tutorials. Their massive popularity is a sign of the market's strength and its astronomical prices.

"It's absolute carnage, but then how else are you going to get it?" said Declan Whitmore, 22, a content creator with more than 600,000 followers, who films his shopping hauls and rare set builds.

Whitmore said getting hold of prized sets wasn't cheap. "Lego goes up in value more than gold at the moment," he noted.

The reference was to a 2021 study by the Higher School of Economics in Russia, which tracked secondary Lego sales over 30 years. It found retired sets generate an average annual return of 10 to 11 per cent, routinely outperforming traditional inflation hedges like fine art and gold. Lego retires sets after one to three years, creating a resale market.

Whitmore got hooked during Covid self-isolation in 2020; today, his pride and joy is a £900 Death Star from *Star Wars*. "There's too many people out there who are scalping," said creator Mike Bell. "They're going in and buying multiple sets on day one and selling them for massively inflated prices online."

Recently, he said, a simple £10.99 Lego vase sold out instantly in store, only to immediately pop up online for £30. Other sets inflate well past that.

Bell said he hoped WeBuyBricks will counter scalpers and make Lego accessible to other hobbyists.

Lane's next ambition is to hire an in-house master builder to design custom sets.

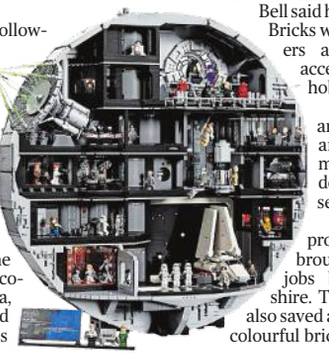
For now, he is proud to have brought 140 industry jobs back to Lancashire. The company has also saved at least 25 million colourful bricks from landfill.

Sets that will set you back

Most expensive Lego kits

Star Wars Death Star, below	£899.99
Star Wars Millennium Falcon	£734.99
Sagrada Família	£649.99
Titanic	£589.99
Lord of The Rings Minas Tirith	£579.99
Pokémon Venusaur, Charizard and Blastoise	£579.99
Star Wars Venator-Class Republic Attack Cruiser	£559.99
Eiffel Tower	£554.99
Avengers Tower	£429.99
Lord of The Rings Rivendell	£429.99

Source: WeBuyBricks



Been loyal to your bank?

With them for years?

Try this...

Call them up, ask for 4% interest

on your savings.

Check if the loyalty

goes both ways.

Don’t tolerate inactive banks

Search >> Active Savings

HARGREAVES
LANSDOWN

Brains behind the can of lager that cools itself

Rob Waugh

It has been two decades since Foster's declared "you wouldn't want a warm beer".

Thanks to James Vyse, an entrepreneur and former cocktail barman, a solution has now been found. The Cool>Can, which Vyse developed at Brains Brewery in Cardiff, chills a can of lager in 60 seconds.

Users simply press a button on the detachable plastic base, and a chemical reaction "sucks" heat out of the liquid inside, with no need for electricity.

Global drinks brands have expressed an interest with a view to a wider global launch of the technology.

Vyse left school without any GCSEs and has no engineering or science qualifications but designed the product himself at home. His lack of schooling meant he relied on "a lot of AI" to design the first version of the product,

James Vyse, an entrepreneur and former cocktail barman, and the Welsh lager

which has been through 1,000 prototypes.

Vyse told The Times: "I've spent a lot of my career in the drinks industry. Wherever you go, you see the same problem: if you want a cold drink, you're dependent on a fridge, ice or somebody having thought about cooling it hours beforehand. Whether you're at a festival, on a beach, travelling, having a barbecue, the problem is remarkably universal. I remember thinking: why can't the drink just cool itself? It became an obsession."

The drinks industry has previously tried to make self-cooling cans, with several attempts since the 1990s, but with little success. A 2012 attempt cost four times as much as a normal can, was tiny and also released a jet of gas as it cooled the liquid down.

Most previous attempts were based on gas technology. By contrast, the Cool>Can uses crystals in a hidden layer in the outside of the can that react with a liquid that users release from the bottom.

The reaction is endothermic, drawing heat in from the surrounding environment, in this case the lager.

The liquid in the can never comes into contact with the cooling chemicals, and the can and its attachment can both be recycled as easily as a normal canned drink. Prices for the lager using the cans have not yet been set. But Vyse has said the product will be affordable and priced similarly to premium cans like Guinness, which feature a "widget" to maintain the beer's head.

Vyse said: "The science behind creating an endothermic reaction isn't new. The really difficult part was engineering that science into something consumers could actually use, safely, economically and at enormous scale. We've gone through years of prototypes, failures and redesigns to solve the containment, activation, heat transfer, manufacturing and recyclability challenges. Eventually that led us to develop our own can architecture."

Vyse said he spent months tearing cans to pieces, resulting in his hands being covered in sticking plasters.

The can mechanism comes in a plastic detachable bottom piece, and reduces the temperature by 10C to 15C, depending on the starting temperature.

Currently it works with a specially designed Brains can of lager but brands can produce and seal their drinks as normal, with Vyse's company, DeltaH Innovations, adding a cooling mechanism. The Welsh government has backed DeltaH's ambitions with a £500,000 grant as the company develops its technology and manufacturing capability in Wales.

Vyse said: "We're now in conversations and development programmes with some of the biggest drinks companies and brands in the world, and we'll be announcing more international names very soon." The company is now investigating other uses for the technology, such as keeping medical products cool. Vyse says he hopes DeltaH can become "the Dyson of cooling".

No match for the fridge

Jane MacQuitty
Comment

Wacky widgets have been fuelling the beer business ever since Guinness patented the first in Ireland in 1969.

Since then, after endless experimentation, most brewers agree that an in-can plastic ball widget, releasing nitrogen gas on opening to provide some of the creamy wallop of a pub draft beer, is the way to go.

And now it's the turn of Wales and the cocktail barman James Vyse with his revolutionary, salt-based, can-within-a-can, self-cooling, Cool>Can Bayside Lager that purportedly chills lager in a minute.

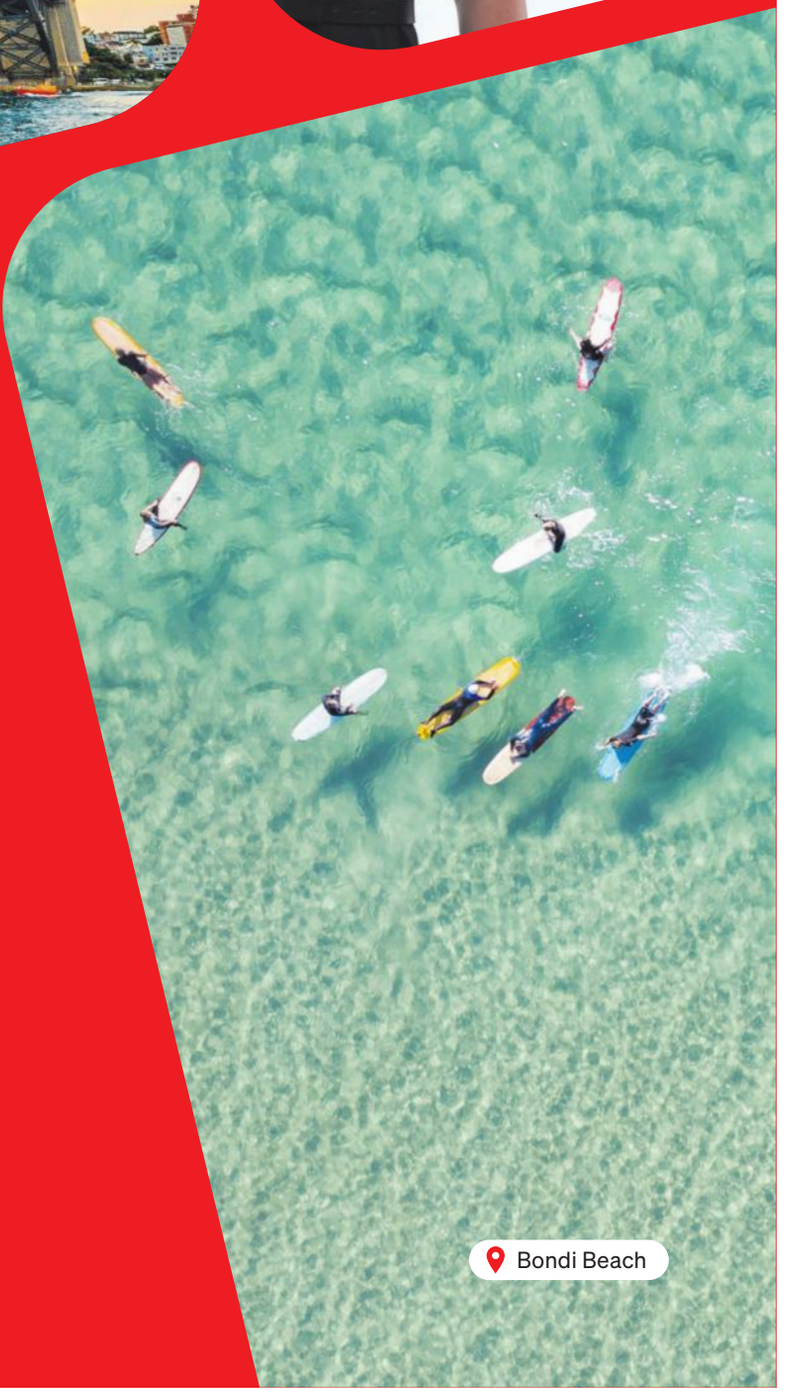
I'm a keen beer drinker and it's a mystery to me why we need this clunky, cumbersome, 9in contraption when it contains just 250ml of lager. Most of us remember to put cans in the fridge in advance and in extremis there are light, portable chill jackets that, kept in the freezer, double up as picnic bag coolers for a day out.

Bayside Welsh lager has a pale straw-gold colour, a pleasingly foamy head and a perfectly decent, light, floral, hoppy lager palate, with a fine barley malt finish. Despite following the brewer's instructions of turning this heavy can upside down, pressing the base firmly for five seconds and swirling the lager about a bit, the contents ended up cool, not cold. Fridges and freezer jackets do a better job.

Jane MacQuitty is the drinks critic for The Times

PETER TARRY FOR THE TIMES

Time traveller Adèle Mildred, an artist, milliner and model, and a classic Ford Mustang provide a taste of what to expect at the Goodwood Revival festival, which takes place at the West Sussex circuit next weekend



Endless Summer SALE

Save on flights to Australia.* Swap the coming cold for glittering harbour cities and sandy beaches.

Visit **qantas.com**

QANTAS
Spirit of Australia

oneworld

*Sale ends 11.59pm (BST) Tuesday 22 September 2026, unless sold out prior. Selected routes, travel dates and conditions apply.

Why dump ten minutes of vintage Mozart?

Opera Richard Morrison

Don Giovanni
Royal Opera House (210 min)
★★☆☆☆

Like the whey-faced ghosts of Don Giovanni's sexual conquests who haunt his mansion in this production, there are remnants of Kasper Holten's 2014 staging of the opera that are still effective in this, its sixth revival at the Royal Opera House.

Es Devlin's surreal two-tiered set, with its Escher-like staircases and shifting doors leading nowhere, remains a striking visual metaphor for an aimless hedonism that can only end in madness. Luke Halls's video design is constantly entertaining: thousands of women's names scrawled so tightly together that they converge into a gigantic blotch that turns blood-red at climactic moments. When this giant projection spins round, with Giovanni in the middle, it's as if the serial predator is being sucked down some psychotic plughole.

But in this revival, supervised by Greg Eldridge, you often feel that the singers are stepping into this visual whirlwind with no cogent idea of their own purpose. It's even hard to work out what sort of character Gordon Bintner's Giovanni is, though he sings well and does plenty of writhing in mental turmoil at the end.

MIHAELA BODLOVIC

Dingle Yandell as Masetto and Giulia Semenzato as Zerlina in a visually striking but often muddled revival of Don Giovanni

He is neither nasty nor seductive, scheming nor sincere. Roberto Tagliavini's solidly voiced Leporello is even less defined. And for whole scenes — the muddled Act I finale particularly — you struggle to fathom why characters are where they are, doing what they are doing.

Then there's Holten's idea of axing the opera's final scene and ending at the moment that Giovanni is dragged to hell (though he isn't, in this staging). Yes, it's claimed that in a 1788 performance Mozart made the same cut. But dumping ten minutes of vintage Mozart simply because it doesn't fit your staging concept seems not just perverse but self-regarding.

That said, there's decent, if not world-class, singing to enjoy. Aigul Akhmetshina, so riveting in many roles, sounds under strain as Elvira, especially high up, but she rallies for *Mi tradi*. Rachel Willis-Sorensen delivers Anna's challenging arias with power and focus. Andreas Bauer Kanabas is a spine-chilling Commendatore and Bogdan Volkov sings Ottavio gracefully. But both Giulia Semenzato as Zerlina and Dingle Yandell as Masetto seem unsure of how to characterise their roles.

None of the cast is helped by a conductor, Stefano Montanari, who takes a stodgy approach to a score that should crackle along, adds keyboard embellishments that sound as if they have escaped from a Rachmaninov concerto, and lets the ensemble between orchestra and stage slip time and again. He needs to get his act together, literally.

Royal Opera House, London, to Oct 15, rbo.org.uk

Donate on the way in to look good

Sophie Freeman

If you're planning to visit a free museum, art gallery or charity event soon, make sure you give your donation on the way in — not on the way out.

People who put their money in the donation box as they leave are perceived as "less moral" than those who do it as they enter, psychologists have found. And if you're on a date there, it could even scupper your chances of a second one, the study suggests.

"For donors, acting pre-emptively can enhance their moral reputation," said the Irish researchers, noting that timing shapes how people perceive a giver's motives.

When people donate before the experience they are perceived to have what is described as a "communal" motive — giving because they care about other people's needs, without knowing exactly what they will get in return.

Giving afterwards, meanwhile, suggests an "exchange motive": calculating what the experience was worth first.

For the study, 194 people read about Taylor, who remained genderless, visiting a free-entry art museum, while a further 494 people read about a first date with Taylor at a free cooking class run by a not-for-profit company.

In both experiments, half were told Taylor donated on the way in and half were told Taylor paid on the way out, before being asked about Taylor's motives, and how likely they would be to accept a second date.

The findings, by researchers from the School of Business at Maynooth University in County Kildare, are published in the journal Social Psychological and Personality Science.

The court keeping women out of jail

A pilot project aims to reform justice for often vulnerable offenders, **Will Humphries** and **Angela Belassie** write

Kiri Johnson found herself in court for the first time after being thrown out of a nightclub in Bristol and ordered by police to leave the city centre. When the 30-year-old carer was seen by officers two hours later she was arrested for breaching the 24-hour dispersal order they had given her.

Eight weeks later the case was thrown out by Joanna Dickens, a district judge, after hearing that Johnson had been ejected from the club for "slapping" a man "who tried to put his hands up her shorts".

This is justice being served in the Bristol women's court, a new locally led scheme to support women through the justice system and reduce the number being jailed for low-level but persistent offending.

The government is investing nearly £32 million over three years into women's community services and said it was determined to end women's imprisonment in all but the more serious cases, a radical vision first set out by Baroness Corston in a government review in 2007.

Corston, a former Labour MP for Bristol East, published 43 recommendations calling for a gender-distinct, women-centred approach to supporting women through the criminal justice system. They gained cross-party support and were broadly accepted by three successive governments but few have been enacted. This year the government said it would "return to the Corston plan and build upon it".

Bristol women's court heard police officers had ignored Johnson's sexual assault allegation and arrested her instead of giving her a caution, despite her having no previous convictions.

The judge, looking at Johnson sitting in the dock, said: "The allegation has gone. You have pleaded not guilty and the prosecution is withdrawing the case. That is the end of it and you remain of good character, which is the right approach."

Johnson needs her good character — the mother of a six-year-old is involved in family court proceedings with her ex-partner.

The Times was watching proceedings in Bristol magistrates' court 12, where a judge presides every Thursday afternoon over selected women's cases. Through a "trauma informed problem-solving approach" to female offenders, combining probation monitoring with access to multi-agency support and interventions, they seek to tackle the root causes of female offending such as substance misuse, trauma from domestic or sexual abuse and housing instability.

The government says courts using similar models see a reduction in further arrests of a third compared with offenders serving standard sentences.

Women, who are often primary carers, make up 4 per cent of the prison population and are more likely to be sentenced for short periods of time, according to the Prison Reform Trust.

Nearly 70 per cent of women in prison report being domestic abuse victims, according to the charity Women in Prison, with 51 per cent separated from children while inside. More women in prison self-harmed (34 per cent) in the year ending March 2024 than men (15 per cent), and the number of instances of self-harm per individual was more than three times as high for women.

FOCUS ON REHABILITATION

Although the women's court was created to cater to the specific needs of female offenders, a trans woman named Faith Mary Jane Christ, 30, appeared via video link from home in Norwich.

Referred to in court as "Miss Christ", the defendant pleaded guilty to spitting in the face of a prison officer at HMP Bristol, a men's prison, who had saved the defendant from an attempted suicide. The court heard that the defendant had ten previous offences for assault by beating of an emergency worker and one of racially aggravated harassment, alarm or distress.

Robyn Rees, a probation officer, told the court that the defendant had recently been given a "suspended sentence and high-level community order" for other offences.

The judge said the latest offence would normally warrant another suspended sentence and high-level community order but she did not want to further complicate the rehabilitation programme. She dealt with the latest offence by ordering the defendant, who is on benefits, to pay £100 in compensation to the prison officer.

A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

In a waiting area outside the courtroom, women of all ages were sitting beneath posters for charities and agencies offering support to victims of domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, as well as those struggling to find jobs and women involved in prostitution.

The court in Bristol follows proposals for radical reforms set out in 2007 by Baroness Corston

Two women from the Nelson Trust, a charity that helps victims of trauma and abuse and those with addiction and mental health problems, were on hand to deliver the government-funded "court diversion service", which provides one-to-one support for women to steer them away from imprisonment and towards female-focused community support services.

When one woman who had a previous conviction for carrying a bladed article failed to attend on bail, a Nelson Trust worker said she had "recently become street homeless and has lost her phone".

District Judge Dickens suggested the "only way of getting her here is to issue a warrant [for her arrest]", but the Nelson Trust worker said they had recently provided her with a new phone and could try to contact her.

Instead of issuing a warrant for her arrest and imprisonment, the judge adjourned the case until the end of the month "because she would not be in the right state to attend today".

Sonya Ruparel, chief executive of Women in Prison, said the pilot scheme in Bristol was "an investment in evidenced-based solutions we advocate for". She added: "Specialised women's courts and community-based support dramatically reduce re-offending compared to arbitrary short-term sentences."

THE NEED TO ENGAGE

The court's leniency does have its limits, however. During the three hours of court proceedings, one woman was remanded in custody and two had warrants for their arrest issued after failure to attend without good cause.

One 48-year-old former care worker, who was a prolific shoplifter and had been given a suspended sentence three weeks ago, was remanded in custody after being arrested for a string of further shoplifting offences and breaching a criminal behaviour order designed to tackle serious and persistent antisocial behaviour.

News

TIMESRadio
Breakfast: 6am to 10am
Our free radio station has all the latest headlines, interviews and debates every morning
Listen seven days a week
On DAB, app, website and smart speaker

More reasons to shop at Morrisons

unbEA

GUY BELL/ALAMY

Gold standard A member of the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery joins the King's Life Guard in Horse Guards, central London. The unit takes over the role for three weeks each year from the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment — known for their scarlet tunics — to give troopers and horses a break

Parents priced out by £1,000 school trips

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor
Georgia Lambert, Eleanor Tait

Schools are charging four-figure sums for holidays, forcing many children to miss out.

One in four parents who paid for at least one foreign trip in the past year spent more than £1,000, research suggests. Those with children at private schools were more likely than others to report skipping trips because of the cost, the charity Parentkind said.

For its annual National Parent Survey, thousands of parents were polled, each with at least one child aged from 4 to 18 in full-time education.

Twenty-four per cent of those with a child who had been abroad reported spending more than £1,000 — 6 per cent had spent more than £2,000.

About 25 per cent of parents with children at private schools said their child had missed a trip because of the cost in the past 12 months, compared with 16 per cent in the state sector.

Alex Stevens, 43, is sending her son, 10, to Switzerland this winter for a £1,450 skiing trip. She described their financial position as

Moss, Hadid and Becks (Jr) book in at Hilfiger's Plaza

Anna Murphy
FASHION DIRECTOR

Eloise, the 1950s children's book character beloved of Americans, isn't the only famous former resident of the Plaza in New York. Tommy Hilfiger is too. "I lived here for ten years," he told me this week. "There is nowhere more iconic for us Americans. It's where Truman Capote held his Black and White Ball [in 1966]. It's where the Beatles and the Stones, Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor, all came to stay."

And it's where Hilfiger broke new ground on Thursday, the first ever designer to take over the hotel's lobby and Palm Court for a runway show. It was opened by Gigi Hadid, one of the biggest models of her generation, with, looking on from the front row, one of the biggest models of an earlier generation, Kate Moss. Romeo Beckham was also on the catwalk, showing off the familial love of body art courtesy of his bermuda shorts.

Gigi Hadid, centre, opened for Tommy Hilfiger, whose shorts showed off Romeo Beckham's body art. Tory Burch's show was strong on colour

Preppy is Hilfiger's middle name. (Not really; it's Jacob.) With this quintessentially American mode of dressing in the ascendant once again, here was the ultimate reminder that no one does it better than Tommy. The sizing was dialled up to deliver the kind of slouch that's cool with the kids right now, and the detailing was given an uptown overlay that fitted right in at the Plaza. Rugby shirts were rendered in silk and baseball jackets came with bracelet sleeves.

Hilfiger gave his bow at the end with a fluffy white dog that was, it was later revealed, a stand-in for Taylor Swift's and Travis Kelce's Samoyed, Wendy. She appears alongside Kelce in his new advert for the brand.

Before a front row that included the singer Lauryn Hill and actress Amanda Seyfried, Tory Burch conjured up a veritable chromo zone, with a succession of gorgeous shades of purple, green, orange, yellow and more. "I just think we all need some joy right now," she said after the show. Richly embellished Bloomsbury-ish dresses and knits plus skinny feather boas were presented cheek by jowl with more utilitarian-looking shirt dresses. "I wanted to give women options," Burch said. And what great options they were.

TABLE

Hundreds of £ Unbeatable Prices

We **guarantee** we **won't** be **beaten** on **price** by Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Aldi and Lidl on our Unbeatable Prices.

More reasons to shop at Morrisons

Majority of stores. Online may vary. Prices matched against Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, GB Aldi and Lidl. Prices matched pro rata & checked on comparable products from GB Aldi stores and Lidl &/or online twice weekly. Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury's checked twice weekly and monthly in store. Morrisons non-promotional prices matched to Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, GB Aldi and Lidl non-promotional prices. Excludes Morrisons Daily and third parties. Verification: my.morrisons.com/unbeatables

One state school offered a £6,500 trip to Borneo, where orangutans can be seen in the wild

privileged but said the family had cut back "across everything", especially their own holidays, to pay for trips on top of school fees of nearly £9,000 a term.

Last year one mother wrote on Mumsnet, the parenting website, that her daughter, 15, who attended a state comprehensive in a less affluent part of northern England, had come home excited about a four-week, £6,500 trip to Borneo. Pupils were expected to fundraise for some of the cost, but the parents expected to have to pay most of it. "I'd love to give her that opportunity but I know we simply can't," she wrote.

Frank Young, chief executive of Parentkind, urged schools to make trips more accessible. "Not all education happens in the classroom," he said.

Parentkind has published its survey in partnership with The Times and The Sunday Times. The survey, by YouGov, draws on 6,053 parent responses weighted to represent a balanced picture of education and family life throughout the UK.

THE FAMOUS FIVE © Hodder & Stoughton Limited. All rights reserved.
*Ticket pricing reflects Advance purchase single fare. These fares are released up to 26 weeks before travel for weekdays and up to 15 weeks before travel for weekends. Availability may vary by route and date. The lowest Advance fares are not available for travel on Sundays. Correct as of 24 August 2026. Terms and conditions apply.

Explore legendary places
with Great Western Railway.

Bristol Temple Meads to
London Paddington from £25.*

GWR

ADVENTURES START HERE

News

Activists are behind a spoof Meta glasses advert in London showing Kylie Jenner

Londoners look askance at my 'pervert glasses'

Testing Meta's hi-tech spectacles, which have tiny cameras in the frame, **Lara Wildenberg** was met with a frosty response on the street

It is mid-morning on a Thursday and the Diana Fountain outside Green Park station in London is getting busier. Tourists consult maps, mothers push prams or browse the menu at the coffee stand, workmen eat their sandwiches. None of them realised they were being filmed by a pair of smart glasses.

The technology, which looks like a normal pair of glasses, can be equipped with AI, audio and cameras in the frame.

Dubbing them "pervert glasses", privacy campaigners have called for the UK to ban their sale amid allegations of women being filmed without their consent. There are concerns that footage could be posted on social media or used by sex offenders, including the risk of AI being employed to "nudify" content.

During a day testing Ray-Ban Meta glasses, which look like tortoise-shell sunglasses, no one was able to identify the technology without being prompted. Subsequent reactions were a mixture of surprise, curiosity and discomfort. Multiple members of the public described the shades as "freaky", "sneaky" and ripe for misuse. Most said it was not obvious when they were filming.

Last year Meta sold seven million pairs of its smart glasses. This autumn both Snap and Google will release their own pairs, and several budget alternatives have started appearing online.

The Ray-Ban Meta glasses, which cost from £247 to £459, feature a 12-megapixel ultra-wide camera capable of capturing high-resolution photos and 3K video, alongside discreet microphones and open-ear audio.

When asked her opinion on smart glasses, one woman, walking past, immediately raised her voice. "Ban them, stamp on [them], it's an] infringement of privacy," she said, waving her arms.

Elaborating, Helen Winters-Dean, from south Wales, said: "I just think they're being used by perverts. I had my photograph taken by someone, I was really annoyed about it, I said if you don't stop filming now I'm going to break your glasses."

In July protesters installed spoof adverts for Meta glasses at London bus stops. One in Carnegie Street featured an image of the paedophile financier Jeffrey Epstein wearing the glasses, with the slogan: "Glasses for people who don't do consent."

Meta's current smart glasses have a small LED in the corner of the frame which flashes once to indicate the taking of a photo and blinks continuously while filming. Following reports of some users disabling the light or buying accessories to block it, Meta updated the glasses to disable recording if the LED had been tampered with or covered.

Yet, even if fully functioning, how much of a safety net is this light? A group of four German women on holiday in London did not register the light when approached by The Times. When the glasses were declared, they reacted with surprise. Jana Rataj, 21, said: "Oh! Really? Now I can see the flashing light ... If you don't know, you won't [recognise] it. I've seen a lot of videos online where men film women without their consent and just post it online. For me, it's pretty concerning."

Another tourist from New Zealand, who did not give her name, said: "[The light] would be very easy to miss, especially with the reflection on the glasses."

Some finance workers finishing their lunchtime run said they had "absolutely not" recognised the glasses.

There is no law in the UK against filming people in public spaces, although firms such as Wetherspoons and Soho House have banned smart glasses in their venues. Enforcement, however, depends on staff recognising when wearers are filming.

Members of the public said the LED on the Meta glasses was clearly visible during one-on-one conversations but not when the wearer was further away, at an angle, or when sunlight was reflecting on the lenses. Meta said the LED was designed to account for different environments and adjusted its brightness depending on whether the wearer was indoors or outdoors.

Despite the smart glasses not being immediately recognisable during the day of testing, their reputation had preceded them. Some reacted with curiosity, inspecting and admiring the design and asking how much they cost. Others were less flattering.

Mid-conversation, James Howard, 36, an engineer from London, said: "Aren't they called pervert glasses?"

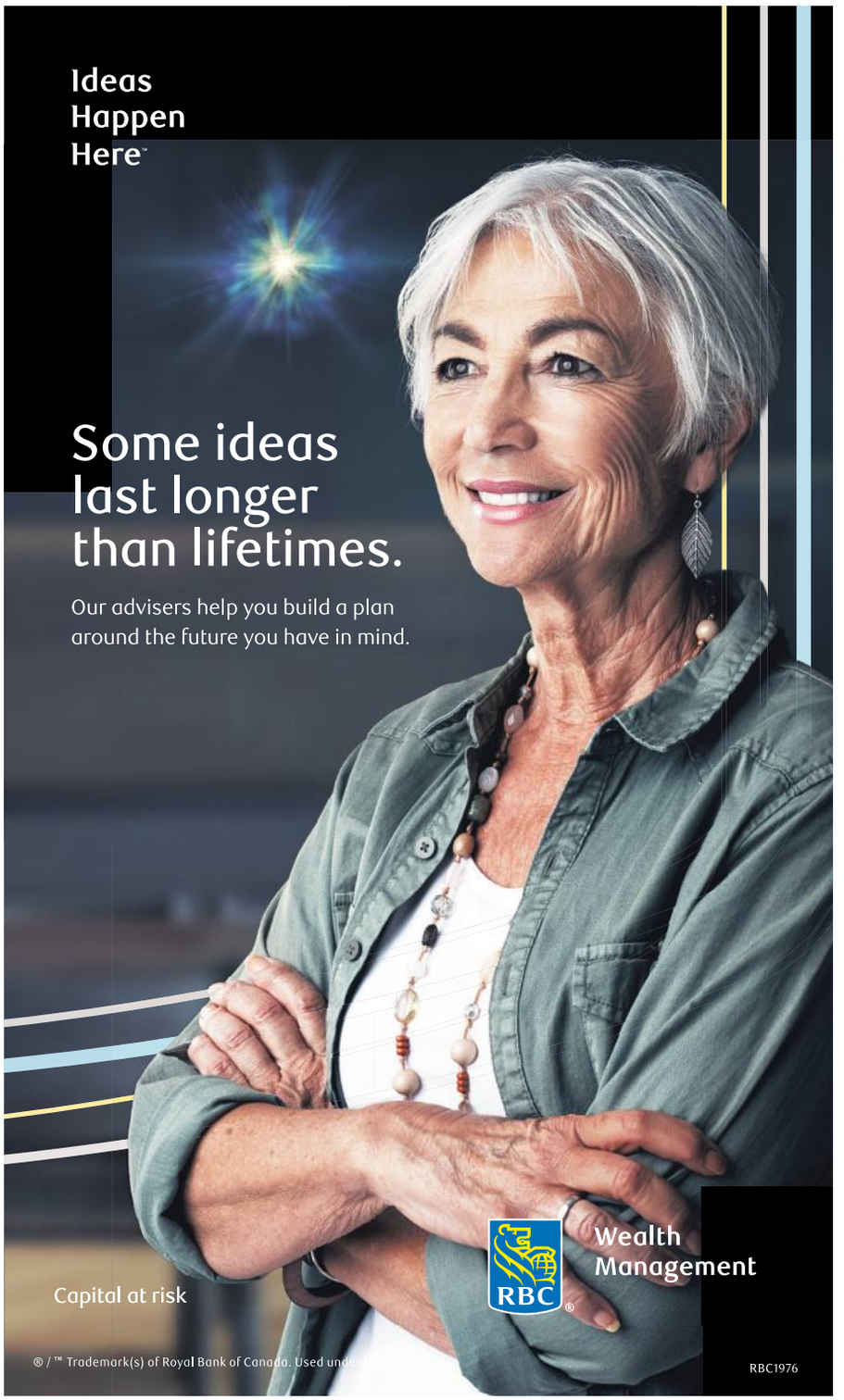
Although Howard said he loved tech, he added: "I don't like the thought of you being able to walk around and being able to record everything. What if you want to stay private? People should be able to make the decision as to whether they're on social media or not."

Two concerned parents, Guy Holder and Liz Hunter, started Stop Smart Glasses, a campaign to ban the sales of the technology in the UK. Hunter said: "We know the problems that exist in society with paedophiles and dreadful crimes and they just seem so obviously like an absolute gift to these dreadful people. Anyone who's on the terrorist watch list, anyone who's on a sex offenders list can just walk into a shop and buy them." She added: "They have this idea that if you have a light, that means that it's consensual but that is actually an inversion, a reversal of consent, where suddenly you have to opt out."

A Meta spokesperson said: "The people who use them and those around them need to trust them. That's why we built privacy into our AI glasses from the ground up. For example, every pair has a capture LED that blinks when you take a photo or video that you can save or share, it can't be turned off, and if someone covers or damages the LED, the camera is disabled. We will keep strengthening our protections as our glasses become even more capable."

A government spokesperson said: "Recording someone in public to cause alarm or distress may constitute offences such as harassment or stalking. We are already further strengthening protections for victims of intimate image abuse through new offences in the Crime and Policing Act."

Lara Wildenberg wearing the Ray-Ban Meta glasses



Why Braintree is running low on goodwill for migrant arrivals
Weekend essay, Fraser Nelson
Pages 38-39

Comment

Know your enemy — it's not Israel, it's Iran

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 brought a new and virulent ideology into the world that we lose sight of at our peril

Maurice Glasman

It is the Jewish New Year today, a time of reckoning for the year that has passed and of wishes for the year ahead. Last year began badly with the stabbing of Melvin Cravitz by Jihad al-Shamie in Heaton Park Synagogue on Yom Kippur. It set the tone.

The year cascaded into an endless drama relating to illegal boat crossings that climaxed last week with 300 men in black, wearing balaclavas, trying to stop a crowded dinghy escorted by the RNLI from docking in Portsmouth harbour.

In the background Sir Keir Starmer was defenestrated as prime minister, Peter Mandelson arrested and members of our special forces charged with crimes that did not exist when they were committed. I do not recall a more confused and chaotic time, in which trust for our institutions has become so frayed.

The most significant event in my year, however, did not take place in Britain. It happened in that foggy interlude between Christmas and the new year when the days are short but the night is long and we gain an intimation of an eternity characterised entirely by stasis.

I noticed, doomscrolling X, that a rebellion had started in Iran. I was sceptical. There had been many over the years and none had come to anything. The Islamic Republic has a supremely effective and brutal system of repression, usually combining rape, killing and torture. But it was also the class basis of the uprisings that made me doubt. The previous protests were led and supported by the more secular middle class — call it north Tehran. South Tehran — working-class and poor — remained stoically indifferent and went about its business. The Islamic Republic retained sovereign control.

As I followed this new uprising, I noticed three significant differences. First, south Tehran was fully present. The weightlifters, the wrestlers, the footballers and the cab drivers were out in force. What they call in Persian the "Bazaaris", the market traders, went on strike. And the protests spread to smaller towns and villages. I could only liken it to the Solidarity uprising in Poland in 1981: young and old, rich and poor, east and west. And in this case, headscarf and no headscarf. This was unprecedented.

Second was its size. An estimated 12 million came on to the streets between December 28 and January 7. For three days the regime lost control of Mashhad, the second largest city.

Government should expel Iranian embassy and recognise Pahlavi

Tehran was tranquil by day but belonged to the protesters at night.

Third, and most strikingly, were the sights and sounds. The crowd proclaimed "Javid Shah" — Long Live the King. The flag they flew was the pre-revolution Lion and Sun. And the biggest chant of all was "In akharin nabarde, Pahlavi barmigarde" — This is the final battle, Pahlavi will return.

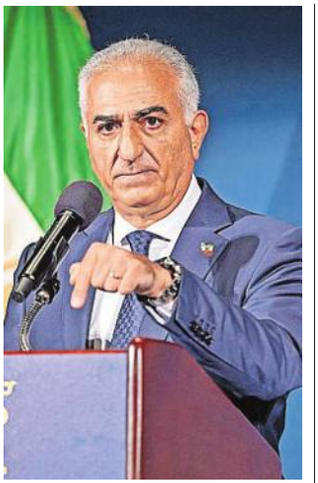
This was a popular counter-revolution to replace the Islamic Republic with a restored constitutional monarchy. And then on January 8 and 9 the internet was cut off. I tried to speak to friends in Tehran who days before were grilling me on how we restored the monarchy after Cromwell, and there was nothing.

During those two days a minimum of 50,000 unarmed people were shot dead by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and their proxies. I have spoken to doctors in Tehran who say 20,000 death notices were issued from hospitals alone for those two days. That does not include those who were zipped up in bags and stashed in wholesale mortuaries, which then charged families to retrieve their sons and daughters. The revolution was killing its children. It always does.

I arrived back in parliament full of energy but all I met was indifference. I thought the fall of the Islamic Republic was in our national interest. The restoration of constitutional monarchy would be the adoption of our system, the threat of terrorist atrocities would be removed, an ideological vanguard of hate and murder defeated. Huge cultural, commercial and academic partnerships would open up as the human and natural assets of Iran became open again. Persian poetry, food and music is a glory of the world. Access to their drone production system alone would complement our support for Ukraine and help rebuild our armed forces.

I invited the crown prince to parliament but no party leader would meet him. More people came to an event I hosted on Grimsby than to a personal audience with the leader of the Iranian opposition.

The seizure of state power by Ayatollah Khomeini's political theology in 1979 brought something new and virulent into the world. Khomeini combined an almost Maoist sense of permanent revolution, cell organisation,



Reza Pahlavi, son of the late Shah, leads external resistance to the regime

technological control and charismatic leadership with an end-times theology based on sacrifice, suffering and death. The IRGC is there to defend the revolution, not the people of Iran. It is guided by the principle of universal jihadi violence.

Since the January uprising neither the mullahs nor the politicians matter. The supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei is in occultation, like the 12th Imam. The IRGC are in full control and ready to slaughter their people again.

In the 47 years since the revolution, we seem to have learnt little of the beliefs and goals that constitute the Islamic Republic of Iran. More to the point, we do not seem to understand it as defined by sustained menace, that it is hostile to our interests and existence.

Our national interest can be defined as using our sovereign power to defend our inheritance of liberty and democracy through both arms and diplomacy. This requires us to define those who are hostile to that and build alliances with those who share our concerns. This, in turn, requires us to distinguish between our friends and enemies. It is entirely legitimate to challenge Israel on its settlement policy but in terms of intelligence on terrorist threats and military technology, Israel is our friend and the Islamic Republic of Iran is our enemy. They preach death and they mean it. The blowing up of the Hatzola ambulances in Golders Green has been traced to Tehran as were 12 other terrorist plots. The IRGC, along with Albanian and Iraqi Kurds, are central to the people-smuggling that led to the debacle in Portsmouth. The goals of prosperity and peace would be greatly enhanced by their defeat.

I call on my government to expel the Iranian embassy, seize their assets and recognise crown prince Pahlavi as the choice of the Iranian people to lead their transition. The war is not between the US, Israel and Iran. It is between the Islamic Republic and the Iranian people. One side is armed, the other is not. One is few, the other is many.

When I was 18, and an unrepentant leftist, I hated the Shah. My first demo was to support the left during the Iranian Revolution. It was the first time I heard Christopher Hitchens and Tariq Ali speak. Great days. Then I witnessed the murder, the terror, the wars and the hate. I had participated in a sin and this New Year I ask for forgiveness by doing penance, and commit myself to the liberty, democracy and monarchy longed for by the Iranian people. Javid Shah.

Lord Glasman is a Labour peer

Ann Treneman Notebook

How I found family gold in my old fabric pile

I have been doing some minor decluttering of my "fabric pile". Everyone who sews or, as in my case, believes they will one day sew again, knows what a fabric pile is. My mother's fabric pile filled a floor-to-ceiling cupboard. Mine is hardly better and is made more chaotic because I am, or used to be, a quilter. This means no scrap is too small to save.

There I was, trying to free up cupboard space, when my eye fell on a shiny white ring-binder. I had always thought this contained my mom's quilt patterns. Perhaps I could rehouse them somewhere else? But then I opened it and found something truly amazing. The story of our lives.

I had known, vaguely, that my mother had taken a "life writing" class at the local community college in McMinnville, Oregon, but had never inquired further. Previously, I had tried to get her to talk about her early life, growing up in the 1930s and 1940s, but she concentrated only on facts and dates. We gave up on that and I had thought no more of it. Now this white binder — and its contents — changed everything.

Precious tales

How strange, at the age of 70, to discover the story of your own birth. I had spent 60-plus years talking to my mother before she died in 2019 but this is one story that was never told in full. It begins with a description of their life in a basement apartment in Iowa City, Iowa, my father in his third year of medical school, my mom a newly graduated occupational therapist. One morning, Mom said she might have the flu. "You don't have a fever," said my dad. "It must be the squirrel stew that we ate for dinner. You'll be fine by noon."

It wasn't the squirrel (!) stew but it took a few more days before the medical student was convinced that Mom was pregnant. "Morning sickness will pass in three months," he promptly announced, the first of many failed predictions. When it was time to tell their parents about the pregnancy, my mom wrote: "We wanted to shout the good news. We had no money for a phone call, so we wrote [to] the grandparents. Wonderful letters arrived by return mail with messages of joy."

I am savouring these tales, page by page, day by day. It feels like Mom is in the room, telling me about her schooldays, her grandparents (whom I never met), college life, my dad and sisters. This binder is a gift, family gold, so precious that I can hardly believe it.

Thoughtful Monty

I am not happy about Monty Don's impending retirement. He has presented *Gardeners' World* for 20-plus years but it is only in the past few that I have come to see that what made Monty and his garden at Longmeadow special had little to do with gardening itself. Monty provides us with continuity, calmness, a steady hand on the tiller who, even as the world goes bonkers, continues to carry on as normal, taking herbaceous cuttings while Ned frolics in the background. It's comfort television at its greenest.

Left on the shelf

Do you have a DNF pile? That refers to "Did Not Finish", by which I mean those books that you somehow never got to the end of. Apparently high on most lists are *Ulysses* (Joyce) and *Moby-Dick* (Melville). Another one on many a DNF pile is *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara. Actually, that last one is in my DNS pile (Did Not Start). It just sits there, taunting me daily.

Comment

Bash the toffs! My new job in the Class Unit

When Bridget Phillipson announced her bold initiative, fired with fury I rushed out to offer my proletarian expertise

Giles Coren

The government's decision this week to treat class as a major inhibitor to social advancement along with gender, race and disability is terribly exciting. Being a Jew, a bloke and very short-sighted has made life nigh-on impossible for me. I wasn't able to break into any of the big money jobs like banking, football or the law, and instead had to take a job here, whining about how hard life is, as we minorities tend to do. But with this acknowledgement that the real problem has been the bigotry heaped upon my class, I feel suddenly a great sense of optimism, an upwelling of faith in the Burnham bounce, a real intimation of change.

"We have been squeamish about class for too long!" roared the minister for women and equalities, Bridget Phillipson, on Wednesday. And I roared with her and punched the air because she sounded just like my own personal political hero, Napoleon out of *Animal Farm*.

"From exam results to life expectancy, we must bear down on the entrenched inequalities that exist in our country," she went on. "These are intergenerational challenges, and our new Class Unit will put them right at the heart of government, as we harness power that for too long has been held in Westminster, and return it to the places people live, work and invest!"

Fired with class fury, I hopped straight in a cab — I mean, flagged down one of those big red things poor people go about in ("buses"?) — and headed down to wherever the ministry is and went straight up to the desk.

"I say, my good woman," I said to the gum-chewing slattern in the chair. "Would you be so good as to point me towards the new Class Unit?"

"Eh?" she grunted.

So I stuck a fag in my mouth, leant sloppily on the counter and said, "Where's the faaaackin Class Unit, luv? I'm 'ere to sign up and smash a few upper class teef in, narmean?"

She raised one buttock cheek slowly off the chair, farted, and pointed down the hall to a door on the left. The words "Flying Squad" had been crossed out with a marker pen and above them someone had written "Klarse Yoonit". I pushed open the door.

Inside, a dozen middle-aged men and women in cheap brown clothes with sociology degrees and bad haircuts sat smoking Richmonds, typing reports on big old-fashioned typewriters and throwing darts at a poster of Jacob Rees-Mogg.

> I grab my flat cap and leap into the nearest dirty white van

I felt a bit bad because I was at Oxford with Jacob and have always liked him. Then again, I was also at Oxford with Andy Burnham's chief of staff, James Purnell (whom I also like), so it shows that Oxford isn't just for posh people. Purnell was at Balliol though, which is the bona fide

Napoleon, like Bridget Phillipson, was a class warrior after my own heart

lefty, working-class, clogs-and-whippets college. It's why Boris Johnson went there.

Because going to Oxford doesn't mean you're posh. After all, Comrade Phillipson went there too. Indeed, she went to Hertford College, the most working-class choice south of Wadham. I had a girlfriend at Hertford whose great-uncle-in-law was the former Labour prime minister Jim Callaghan, so it must be. And even if it wasn't, Comrade Phillipson would still be working class because she went to a comprehensive, like my daughter.

"Did I hear my name?" said a short woman in a Zhongshan suit with a flat fringe and a little pair of Trotsky specs, striding towards me.

"Yes, ma'am, Comrade Phillipson, ma'am," I said, standing to attention and clicking my heels. "I'm here to sign up for the Class Unit."

"Hmmm," she said, looking me up and down and walking round me with her hands clasped behind her back. "Normally we promote people only after a full year in the Closing Down Private Schools (CDPS) division or the Taxing Billionaires into Exile (TBE) department. But as it happens we are... wait! What's that on your sweater? Is that a blob of HUMMUS?"

"Er, no," I said as she reached for her patented Heckler & Koch Hummus Detector, scraping it up and throwing it into my mouth. "It's grout. I've been tiling a hospital urinal. NHS obviously. As part of my working-class job working hard in a working-class place."

"Oh well, then," said Comrade Phillipson. "You're hired."

Next morning, my first on the job, I'm just taking a sip of my Fairtrade Ethiopian arabica double cortado with organic yak's mi... sorry, I mean mug of strong tea boiled from my own piss with condensed milk and 12 sugars, when a cry goes up from the boss's office: "Kirstie Allsopp's tweeting posh stuff again!"

So I toss my deep-fried tripe sandwich from Greggs in the bin, grab my flat cap from the hat stand, slide down the fire pole to the unit car pool and leap into the driving seat of the nearest dirty white van with furry dice hanging off the rearview, overflowing ashtray and an old copy of the Sun folded over on the dashboard so that Sam Fox's tits are facing out through the windscreen.

"What has the Honourable Ms Allsopp, daughter of the 6th Baron Hindlip, done now, Sarge?" I say, sparking a Lambert and turning the ignition key.

"Apart from being what you just said," says Comrade Phillipson, locking and loading her Glock 40 "Toff Snuffer", dropping a round in the chamber and checking the sight with a satisfied grunt, "she has been on about dishwashers again; says she doesn't understand how anyone can make do with only three".

"Oh, God, yah, I know," I say. "One for the downstairs kitchen, one for the butler's pantry, one in the basement for nanny, and then what on EARTH is one supposed do after dinner parties?"

Comrade Phillipson looked at me.

"Sorry," I said. "I mean: posh cow! One is enough for anyone."

She raised an eyebrow.

"I mean, who needs a dishwasher? The good honest toil of scrubbing pots and pans by hand even if you never get them clean is reward enough in itself."

Still, she scowled. So I thought hard, dug deep, tried to remember my re-education. Then it came to me, page 114, paragraph 3, of Chairman Burnham's *Little Red Book*: "No one shall have anything nice, pretty, clean, useful or convenient. Or remember when they did. Or even know that such things are possible."

"I am sorry to appear ignorant, Comrade Phillipson, ma'am," I said. "But what's a 'dishwasher'?"

For the first time that day, she smiled. "Comrade Coren," she said, reaching out to shake my hand, "I think you and I are going to get along just fine. Now hit the gas and let's go shoot some kulaks!"

Jim Dixon Nature Notebook

Estate offers magical mix of muirs and mountains

We spent a week in the glorious glen of the upper River Dee, following trails through ancient pinewoods and the braes of this fine river, casting for an elusive fish and taking in this special landscape. The Dee here flows through a small number of large estates, notably Royal Balmoral. At the head of the Dee the National Trust for Scotland stewards an enormous land holding at Mar Lodge of nearly 30,000 hectares. Partly designated as one of Scotland's national scenic areas and all within the Cairngorms National Park, this is a magical mixture of a great river, vast muirs, Caledonian pine woodlands and mountainous terrain that has all the Highland romance and grandeur. The Munro of Lochnagar dominates Royal Deeside between Ballater and Braemar and the grandest and highest reaches of the Cairngorms on the Mar Lodge estate include four of Scotland's five highest mountains and Britain's most important montane habitat.

It would take a lifetime of walking Deeside's mountains and braes to understand the complexities of managing this land for deer and grouse, forestry, farming and fisheries. It is clear, though, that the health of the river depends to a large extent on land: mountains, whose annual snow melt powers a famous spring run of salmon; Caledonian pinewoods with carpets of heather and bilberry, home to capercaillie and crested tits; and forests and farms that provide jobs in this sparsely populated place.

The Cairngorms National Park and Dee District Salmon Fishery Board recently commissioned a report on the Dee catchment. It itemises many actions to recover the spring salmon population and general health of this most elegant and wild river. It is to be hoped that actions will follow.

Wildfire woes

I had hoped to visit RSPB's vast Abernethy reserve in Strathspey, but it remains closed after the wildfire that tore through this precious place during the summer. The increasing severity of wildfires is undoubted but the causes and mitigating factors are contested. Some argue that a fuel load of wilder vegetation increases the intensity of fires, others that climate change is the bigger factor. Fires are not new in this landscape; the Highland naturalist Seton Gordon, writing at a time when the land was intensively keepered, noted: "In the early summer of 1929 an extensive fire burned in Abernethy ... and a great area of trees were destroyed in Rothiemurchus".

It was good to hear that, coinciding with my week in Deeside, the King was at Balmoral convening a gathering of Scotland's leading land and environment bodies to consider the response to wildfires. The prime minister is also committed to a "wildfire summit" in the autumn, so it seems this serious and complicated issue is now firmly on the political agenda. More must be done to support the overstretched fire and rescue services and land managers, to plan better for wildfires and to increase capacity to fight fires from the air to extinguish them faster.

Cairngorms National Park has rare riches such as the red squirrel, left

Reds under threat

It was a delight to see many red squirrels across the Cairngorms National Park: in Deeside's oak and pinewoods and by villages and farmsteads. Local people have clearly taken the plight of the declining red to heart, with many signs warning motorists to watch out for scampering squirrels. Sadly, despite these requests we found a few road casualties. Despite much conservation effort, led by the UK Squirrel Accord, and some successes where grey squirrels have been controlled in places like Anglesey and South Cumbria, the most recent Mammal Society and Red Squirrel Survival Trust distribution maps show an alarming reduction in range including, worryingly, the Highlands.

While habitat fragmentation and disease are parts of the challenge facing red squirrels, it is largely the sheer scale of competition by grey squirrels that is the greatest threat. In woodland, the greys — which are four to five times heavier than reds — also have higher productivity and greater population densities so they massively outcompete reds by a factor of over 100. Grey squirrel control is controversial, costly, labour-intensive and must be carried out consistently in an area to give reds a chance. It remains important that red squirrel populations on islands such as Brownsea, the Isle of Wight and Anglesey remain protected and viable. As ever with conservation, good insights help plan for effective action. If you are lucky enough to spot a red squirrel in Scotland, you should report it to scottishsquirrels.org.uk or to your local Wildlife Trust or Mammal Society group in England and Wales.

Jim Dixon's book, Scattering Plenty: The People Who Made the Modern Countryside is published by The History Press

@JIMDIXONWRITER.BSKY.SOCIAL

Buy prints or signed copies of Times cartoons from our Print Gallery at timescartoons.com or call 0800 912 7136

We owe it to our kids to reclaim Nineties spirit

Nostalgia is building for a decade full of optimism — we need to give future generations light at the end of the tunnel

Janice Turner

@VICTORIAPECKHAM

On Wednesday night I switched on *Newsnight* as dour Victoria Derbyshire shared claims that within the next decade there was a 10 per cent chance of AI obliterating all human life. Should I stay up and contemplate the coming apocalypse, the deaths of everyone I love? Nope, I switched off before this monstrous new anxiety stole my sleep.

Once, millenarianism was posted through your door in religious tracts, now it comes for you at bedtime on the BBC. Whistleblowers at Anthropic may be right to warn us of AI's evil powers, but how should we deal with that knowledge? Add it to a mental worry list of wildfires, melting glaciers, Ukraine's suffering, Russia, China, Gaza-Israel, Iran, terrorism, another looming financial crash...

Amid this End of Days gloom came an announcement by the National Theatre's artistic director, Indhu Rubasingham, that its coming programme would contain a new James Graham play dramatising John Major's rise to power and another by Moira Buffini on the Good Friday Agreement. It is interesting, said Rubasingham, "how playwrights were looking at the 1990s, which now feels particularly like a time of huge optimism, internationalism and exchange".

Were the 1990s more optimistic? It is difficult when interrogating the past to separate historic events from personal memories. Certainly I was optimistic back then: the decade spanned my mid-twenties to mid-thirties when I married, bought a flat, had two children, established my career. I was fortunate, but not remarkably so: most people my age were building such lives.

Our trajectories were upward, and that felt reflected in the politics of the age. The fallen totalitarian regimes of the eastern bloc had spilled happy, free young people into the West; the nuclear threat that haunted our childhoods had (seemingly) abated; apartheid, that stain on humanity, was dead; dictators seemed to be turning towards democracy; we'd healed the ozone layer by banning CFCs and sorted out acid rain.

> It felt as though the country needed that New Labour landslide

Then the New Labour landslide felt, even for many conservatives, like what the country needed after Thatcherism's death-throes, Major's cones-hotline flailing. Things Can Only Get Better is such a cliché now, but we'd survived a vicious early 1990s recession and the public realm was derelict.

The problems government needed to address were basic and achievable: a minimum wage, Sure Start centres, lower class sizes. Government investment felt like a lifesaving blood transfusion: the shabby hospital where I'd given birth got a shiny wing, my sons' primary school built new toilet blocks and fixed the roof. But New Labour didn't just pick low-hanging fruit: it is hard to convey to under-40s the miracle of peace in Northern Ireland. Moreover we had leaders, finally, who shared our views on homosexuality, women's rights and racism. (Bye, Peter Lilley's hateful little list.)

In the 1990s, today's gravest problems were only distant hums. We didn't worry about contributing to climate change, barely recycled, drove everywhere, relished the suddenly available disposable fashion and cheap Chinese goods. (Which probably isn't what Rubasingham meant by "internationalism and exchange".) Terrorism raged in screwed-up faraway regimes, not on western streets.

"The Nineties was the greatest modern decade to live through," says my son. "You don't know how lucky you were." Now young people hoover up *Friends*, *This Life* and Britpop, post clips of clubs and gigs where everyone is laughing or dancing, not glued to phones. It takes 30 years for an era to be ripe for nostalgia: time enough for fashions to be retro not lame, but recent enough to imagine yourself there. (We felt we'd missed that cool, revolutionary paradise the Sixties, when you could walk into any job and

> The average home cost 3.6 times earnings; it's now more than 8

London houses cost seven grand.) Though this is very much a western lament: I'd bet few Gen Z Chinese yearn for 1995 when GDP per capita was $600 rather than $13,300, or Indians mourn for when infant mortality was three times higher than now. For the young of Africa, Asia and South America, the 21st century is an upward curve.

But British Gen Z has a point. The only major downside to the mid-1990s is that crime was at a historic peak. You are now less likely to have your house burgled or your car stolen — if you own either. Now only a third of under-25s have learnt to drive and the average home, which in 1997 cost 3.6 times earnings, is more than eight.

People are less optimistic because of the gravity of global events only revealed to us after 9/11 and because, around 2010, technology ceased being a tool to make our lives easier and more connected and became a force to enslave and scam us, to laden us with complex tasks companies once performed; to make us anxious, angry and self-loathing; to create a means to replace us and, if reports from Anthropic are right, maybe even kill us.

But for the young it is simply that the basic underpinnings of my own 1990s optimism are now so hard to acquire. I read in my local paper that inner London will have 9.4 per cent fewer primary children by 2029. Already the state schools where we fought for places have falling rolls or have closed. My friends pondered whether to have a third child: Gen Z will most likely have one, if they are parents at all. With a birthrate of 1.3 we are entering the unsettling, bleak, dystopian territory of *Children of Men*.

I look forward to the National's plays about what seem like more wholesome times, where political sides weren't bitterly entrenched and horizons seemed open. But optimism will only return when we as a society do what every species must: ensure future generations have somewhere to nest and are able to raise their young.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Holocaust teaching

Sir, Peter Grimsdale's letter (Sep 10) likens Israeli actions in settlements to the start of the Nazi Holocaust. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance identifies comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis as examples of antisemitism. The reference to Holocaust education as a vehicle for condemning Israeli action illustrates everything that is wrong with the way it is taught.

First, at government insistence, Holocaust education has to include other genocides, thereby relativising the unique Jewish one. Second, it places deadly antisemitism in the past, located in Germany and nothing to do with today. Third, it fails to explain why the state of Israel is necessary and legitimate, leaving students unable to understand the political demonisation of Israel and how that is rooted in the same old antisemitism. The Holocaust Education Trust recently marked the success of Holocaust education, and yet ironically on that same occasion Simon Schama felt it necessary to expose as a lie the claim that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. Two days later the government imposed sanctions on Israeli settlements causing the Chief Rabbi to point out the danger this will cause to British Jews. These disconnects illustrate the need to move Holocaust education on from its focus on the past to the severe dangers to Jews and the Jewish state today and their root causes.
Baroness Deech
House of Lords, London SW1

REVEL IN THIS ELEGANT BOOK SHOWING TIMES READERS AT THEIR MOST WHIMSICAL AND DROLL

To order a copy of Sir, The Year in Letters for the discounted price of £8.99 go to timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935. Free UK standard P&P on online orders over £25. Special discount available for Times+ members

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

Corrections and clarifications

ipso. Regulated *The Times* takes complaints about editorial content seriously. We are committed to abiding by the Independent Press Standards Organisation ("IPSO") rules and regulations and the Editors' Code of Practice that IPSO enforces. Requests for corrections or clarifications should be sent by email to feedback@thetimes.co.uk or by post to Feedback, The Times, 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Doctors' qualms about the assisted dying bill

Sir, As a rheumatologist I am infrequently involved in discussions about end-of-life care but, like all doctors, I encounter patients who are approaching the end of their lives and who, at times, are living with intolerable distress. Although I am agnostic about the ethics of assisted dying, my concern is more about how it would affect our relationships with patients. The inevitable blunting of the taboo around death that would result from a change in legislation would change this dynamic, shifting the boundaries. This relationship has been calibrated over generations of medical practice, and in disrupting it we must be careful what we wish for.
Dr Toby Garrood
Reigate, Surrey

Sir, Assisted dying legislation assumes the co-operation of the medical profession. Doctors have long had a duty to care for the dying and certain medications for relief of pain may secondarily shorten life. But at no time is the primary intent of a physician to shorten or end life. Nor should it ever be ("Irredeemable", leading article, Sep 11). If the public, via their elected representatives, wish to make assisted suicide legal, they should employ non-medical personnel and train technicians for the task.
Dr Paul D Ridley
Stoke on Trent, Staffs

Sir, Would you want to be treated by a doctor who had prepared a poison for the previous patient to consume? There is no substitute for the kindly palliative care my wife received 42 years ago.
Dr Robert J Leeming
Balsall Common, W Mids

Sir, Oliver Wright refers to "the legislation which would allow a terminally ill person to end their own life" ("Make or break for assisted dying bill", Sep 11). It is fundamental to the legislation that was proposed, and to the debate around it, that it did more than allowing a person to end their own life. The very purpose of the proposed legislation was to decriminalise the acts of other persons, in particular doctors, required to bring the life of the person in question to an end.
Duncan Bagshaw KC
London W14

Sir, The government must fix the crisis in palliative care in England — nearly one in three people die without the help they need, in pain or on busy, chaotic hospital wards. How we support people at the end of life reflects our values of community and fellowship as a civilised society.
Dr Sam Royston
Director of research and policy, Marie Curie; London SW11

Sir, In Switzerland, article 115 of the penal code, in force since 1942, simply declines to punish someone who assists a suicide from unselfish motives. Nobody legislated it, nobody designed it and no parliament has ever approved the private organisations that grew up in the gap. Nor do most western European countries have such a law. Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Greece do not. Portugal legislated in 2023 and the law is still not in force, having been vetoed twice and then partly struck down by its constitutional court. And there is no "best practice" to copy because the models contradict each other. In 2023, Denmark's ethics council concluded, by 16 members to one, that no safe regulation was possible.
Michael Grant
Grenaa, Denmark

RNLI rescues

Sir, It is unfortunate that the brave and selfless volunteers in the RNLI are in the midst of the controversy about small boat crossings ("RNLI warns volunteers after 'traitor' threats", Sep 11). However, the public were told that the French could not assist in open water due to the risks. Instead, the boat was met mid-Channel in what appeared to be a simple and obvious rendezvous at which the RNLI were instructed to collect the occupants and bring them to England. If their lives were truly in danger the French should have been equally capable of rescuing them and returning them to France.
Jamie Berry
London SW1

Sir, A 25-year involvement as a volunteer at our local lifeboat station taught me one thing above all else: RNLI crews work on a totally non-judgmental basis, their sole motivation being the preservation of life at sea. During these years our crew responded at all times of year, day and night to people falling foul of bad weather, bad luck, bad judgment, bad maintenance, bad navigation, bad seamanship and sometimes downright stupidity. All are treated with exactly the same respect, as volunteers recognise the simple fact that none of their "clients" would have chosen to need the services of the RNLI but all were grateful for them. Those that demonise the RNLI for going to the aid of migrant boats should understand the simple fact that volunteers are following a humane agenda, not a political one.
David Johnston
North Berwick, E Lothian

Tapestry dawdlers

Sir, Your report ("Bayeux Tapestry open, let battle begin", Sep 11) on dawdlers in the British Museum forcing ticket holders to be turned away reminded me of the crowd management used at the museum's Tutankhamun exhibition in 1972. There were no timed admissions but uniformed keepers would forcefully usher people along. One muttered to me something about pushing men off the landing craft at D-Day.
Joanne Aston
Thirsk, N Yorks

Sir, The Bayeux tapestry is exhibited in a straight line. Why not install a travelator, such as those used in airports, which would take 40 minutes from beginning to end? There would be no dawdlers, no hold-ups, no missed bookings and precise visitor management.
Alfred Manders
Alcester, Warks

Pollution dilution

Sir, Deborah Ross ("I am naive about lavatories", Times 2, Sep 10) is amusing about unnecessary lavatory flushing but it is a serious problem. One's sympathy must be with the water companies — not the overpaid executives, but the operatives who have to treat the sewage so that it is safe to discharge. The greater the volume, the more difficult their task. Understandably this is aggravated by unnecessary flushing as well as water from showering and clothes washing but more seriously from the illegal connection of rainwater systems into the sewage service.
Richard Falconer
Painswick, Glos

ANOTHER CLOSE SHAVE FOR THE DUCE

FROM THE TIMES SEPTEMBER 13, 1926

The latest attempt upon the life of Signor Mussolini most happily has been as unsuccessful as its predecessors. On the morning of the 11th a young Italian Communist, who had recently returned from abroad, flung a bomb at the Prime Minister's motor-car just outside the Porta Pia. It was a miraculous escape; the missile broke the window of the car, but fell outside and exploded in the street, and the Duce, unhurt by the splinters which wounded eight bystanders, drove on to the Palazzo Chigi, while his escort pounced upon the would-be assassin, who narrowly escaped death at the hands of the infuriated populace.

Later in the day Signor Mussolini addressed a multitude of his sympathizers from the balcony of the Palazzo. There were passages in his speech which can scarcely be described as diplomatic. Full allowance, however, must be made for the natural indignation of a vehement and magnetic leader, who is as forceful an exponent of the unconventional in oratory as he is a professor of the art of "living dangerously". The main fact is that he has again escaped from deadly peril.

The ultimate aims of Fascismo and of its chief are still uncertain. There are features in its political practice and philosophy which are repugnant to British political tradition. But Italian Fascismo is a fact and Fascist Italy a force of unexhausted potentialities, represented by the compelling and original personality on whose escape not Italy alone is to be congratulated to-day.

● At half-past 9 two nights ago a bomb exploded in a motor-car at the junction of First Avenue and 116th Street, in the heart of the extensive Italian colony here. Of the three occupants of the car one was instantly killed, both the legs and arms of another man were torn off and the third man lost a leg and was otherwise terribly mutilated. All three were Italians.

The explosion occurred only a short time after an open-air meeting held by the Fascists at the same corner. An eye-witness said that as the car approached the corner the occupants peered out as though in search of something and seemed chagrined at the failure to find what they were looking for.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Church attendance

Sir, Canon Male (letter, Sep 10) claims that the Church of England has grown in attendance every year for the past five years. Yes, but not the past six. The weekly average for 2019 was 854,000 and last year it was 707,000. The Church has been struggling to recover from Covid. Something must be done to bring its beautiful but desperate buildings under some form of secular authority.
Sir Simon Jenkins
Author, *England's Thousand Best Churches*; London W8

Sir, In hospital last week I was allocated a bed opposite 12a — 13 in reality. Deeply ingrained in most Christians and others is the story of 13 people at supper 2,000 years ago, yet only a minority of adults in England and Wales now consider themselves Christians. It is illogical, of course, but I would also prefer not to be in bed 13.
Ian Maiden
Beaulieu, Hants

Theatre pricing

Sir, It is Clive Davis's focus on a £395 top price ticket that gives the West End a "luxury label" ("Nicholas Hytner is wrong about dynamic pricing", Sep 10). But in 2025, the median ticket price was £56. Fewer than 4 per cent of tickets were sold for more than £150 and the average price paid was 8.9 per cent lower in real terms than in 2019. High prices at the top end reflect the value audiences place on live entertainment.
Patrick Gracey
Theatre producer, London W6

Playing the game

Sir, Dr Cave's letter (Sep 11) reminds me of when I defended two poachers who were caught carrying a dead pheasant back to their car. They said they could not sleep and were out for an innocent dawn drive. They claimed the pheasant had flown into their car and fluttered across the field. Out of the kindness of their hearts, they ran after it to see if the bird had survived. They were sad to see it was dead. The prosecutor asked why they brought it back to the road. "Maybe to give it a decent interment under the hedge," the chairman of the Bench replied.
Gervas Steele
Burnham Market, Norfolk

Sir, I have twice helped to butcher and eat a roadkill deer delivered by obliging officers in a police car.
George Darwall
Fontmell Magna, Dorset

In hot water

Sir, Keith Florence's letter (Sep 10) on Chinese men enjoying hot soup while the women prepare the next course reminds me of a French friend who said the *apéritif* was invented to allow ladies time to lay the table and the *digestif* for them to do the washing up. This view encountered short shrift from his distaff side.
Dr Julian Critchlow
Ditcham, Hants

Top of the class?

Sir, Paul Bethel (letters, Sep 11), step aside! Wells Cathedral School was founded in 909, five years before Warwick School. It is one of the oldest extant and continuously operated schools in the world.
Bonnie White
Wells, Somerset

Daily Universal Register

World: President Xi of China and President Putin of Russia to attend a meeting of Brics leaders in Delhi, India; World First Aid Day.

Birthdays today

Alfie Allen, *pictured*, actor, *Girl Taken* (2026), 40; **Bertie Ahern**, taoiseach (1997-2008), 75; **Chris Breward**, director, National Museums Scotland, 61; **Joshua Cheptegei**, long-distance runner, 5,000m and 10,000m world record holder (since 2020), 30; **Lord (Andrew) Ericht**, senator of the Inner House of the Court of Session, 63; **David Goodhart**, founder (1995) of Prospect magazine, 70; **Prof Sir Mel Greaves**, biologist, founding director, Centre for Evolution and Cancer, London, 85; **Sir Wes Hall**, former West Indies cricketer and politician, 89; **Warrant Officer Class 1 Kim Hughes**, soldier, bomb disposal expert awarded the George Cross (2010), 47; **Jennifer Hudson**, singer and actress, 45; **Greg Jackson**, founder and chief executive, Octopus Energy, 55; **Anthony Loyd**, journalist, special correspondent for The Times, 60; **General Sir Rob Magowan**, commander, Cyber and Specialist Operations Command, 59; **Sir Michael Moritz**, venture capitalist, Sequoia Capital, 72; **Adam Nicolson (Lord Carnock)**, writer, *Sissinghurst: An Unfinished History* (2008), 69; **Michael Ondaatje**, writer, *The English Patient* (1992), 83; **Sir Kevin Sinfield**, rugby player, former England captain, 46; **Jean-François van Boxmeer**, chairman, Vodafone Group, 65; **Sir William Worsley**, chairman, Forestry Commission (2020-Feb 2026), 70.

Birthdays tomorrow

Stella McCartney, *pictured*, fashion designer, 55; **Amma Asante**, film-maker, *Belle* (2013), and chancellor, Norwich University of the Arts, 57; **Barbara Bain**, actress, *Mission: Impossible* (1966-69), 95; **Jacqueline Bisset**, actress, *Bullitt* (1968), 82; **Dame Linda Colley**, historian and author, *The Gun, The Ship, and The Pen* (2021), 77; **Lord (Neil) Davidson of Glen Clova KC**, advocate general for Scotland (2006-10), 76; **Alain Ducasse**, chef, Alain Ducasse at The Dorchester, 70; **Niall FitzGerald**, honorary KBE, businessman, chairman, British Museum (2006-14), 81; **John W Henry**, businessman, the principal owner of Liverpool FC (via Fenway Sports Group), 77; **Arek Hersh**, Holocaust survivor, educator and writer, *A Detail of History* (1998), 98; **Niall Horan**, pop singer, One Direction, 33; **Michael Johnson**, athlete, four-time Olympic track and field gold medallist, 59; **Dame Eleanor King**, lady justice of appeal, chairwoman of the Judicial College, 69; **Dame Carolyn McCall**, chief executive, ITV, 65; **Lord (Colin) Moynihan**, chairman, British Olympic Association (2005-2012), 71; **Michael Murray**, chief executive, Frasers Group, 37; **Air Marshal Sir Baz North**, president, Royal Air Forces Association, 67; **Zak Starkey**, drummer, the Who (1996-2025), 61; **Richard Tice**, deputy leader of Reform UK, 62; **Christopher Woodward**, director, Garden Museum, London, 57.

On this day

In **1624** King James I watched as the first working prototype submarine submerged 4m beneath the River Thames.

The last word

"Progress doesn't come from early risers — progress is made by lazy men looking for easier ways to do things." Robert Heinlein, writer, *Time Enough for Love* (1973)

Tough Love

Alan Milburn is right that the state must adopt a stronger approach to getting young people off benefits. Labour should listen to his solutions for fixing a broken system

Last November, the government set Alan Milburn an essay question: why are there now one million 16 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training? The rise of what are termed "Neets" is not only a vast waste of talent but costing the state dearly. According to the youth charity Impetus, each Neet costs the state £244,000. The number of young people who are receiving means-tested benefits has doubled from 160,000 in 2019 to 300,000 at the end of last year — a level that shames the last Conservative government and the current Labour one. Diagnosing why this problem exists is one challenge; a greater one is fixing it.

Mr Milburn, a former cabinet minister from the New Labour era, has begun to sketch out what the answer to this thorny question is. In an interview with this newspaper today, he argues that the government must take a "tough love" approach to young people relying on benefits. Mr Milburn says that a new deal for younger people is required, in which they will be given more support to get into jobs but also face a "duty to engage" with employment. As part of this, his reforms would include a "backstop" to reduce benefits if people who are fit and able to work fail to participate. Other welfare systems in Europe offer the inspiration for how such a system could work.

Mr Milburn states an obvious truth: there has been too much "pussyfooting" on this issue. The current situation represents "state failure" and is morally indefensible. His review has found that 84 per cent of Neets want to work but are put off by a broken welfare system that makes them better off not working. A reset is needed on both sides: the state must be more effective when it comes to getting people into employment, but younger people should also see work as something they have to do, not an optional extra.

Take, for example, personal independence payment (Pip) — a disability benefit paid whether someone is in work or not. Across all ages, there are now four million Pip claimants, and the bill has doubled from £16.3 billion in 2019/20 to over £27 billion and is forecast to hit £41 billion by the end of this parliament. There is an acute issue with Pip and younger people: two thirds of those between 16 and 24 years old who claim this benefit cite conditions such as ADHD, autism and anxiety as their qualifying condition. Although these may cause genuine distress, they are not what Pip was originally intended to assist with. However, this must not be about taking money from people who are genuinely unable to work by reason of disability. Those who need support must get it.

Mr Milburn's task is huge but he feels optimistic about his chances of success. He has seen what can be done after visiting the Netherlands with former England manager Sir Gareth Southgate to look for solutions. Whereas the UK has a Neet rate of 13.6 per cent, the Dutch one is just 4.8 per cent, thanks to the success of programmes aimed at getting young people into work. Much of what Mr Milburn will recommend in his final report, due this autumn, will be uncontentious. For example, it is widely accepted that more apprenticeships and work experience slots are needed.

However, the government will find it more difficult to implement Mr Milburn's quid pro quo arrangement compelling young people to seek work. Mr Milburn claims that Andy Burnham is deeply committed to fixing this problem. Good. But neither the prime minister nor his tsar should be squeamish about radically rethinking benefits for young people. Although some campaigners will balk at a tough love approach, including backbench Labour MPs, the reality is that there is widespread support beyond Westminster for rethinking welfare. It is not controversial to say that a life needlessly reliant on the welfare state is not to be encouraged. Mr Burnham has a unique opportunity to be bold. He must be.

Time for Truth

A full public inquiry should compel testimony on the Nottingham maternity scandal

The report by Donna Ockenden into failures of maternity services at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, published in June, laid bare a culture of bullying, callousness and inefficiency. Far too often, the concerns of pregnant women were ignored, babies in distress during labour were overlooked, and situations that should have been rapidly referred to senior doctors were left to worsen. Among certain nurses, overstretched and understaffed, the attitude appeared to be that labouring women were a nuisance, to be actively discouraged from reaching the maternity unit until as late as possible. When some expectant mothers did make it in with concerns, the aim was often to get them out: the acronym "FOH" — in which "F" was a swear word, "O" was "off", and "H" was "home" — was written on a whiteboard next to the names of heavily pregnant women.

The consequences were heartbreaking: the 400-page report concluded that 520 mothers and babies had suffered potentially avoidable harm, including 162 deaths. Among the affected parents were Jack and Sarah Hawkins, who both worked as clinicians at the trust. Mrs Hawkins spent six days in labour, contacting the hospital numerous times only to be told repeatedly by staff that she was not. An independent external review later found that 13 "major care failings" had contributed to their daughter Harriet being stillborn, a death which was "almost certainly preventable".

The Hawkins' story is but one of many tragedies, each carrying its own distinct burden of grief. Yet as the Ockenden report made very clear, these did not arise from nowhere, but in large part from appalling mismanagement on the part of the trust's senior leadership, who ignored warnings from doctors and nurses about unmanageable workloads. Many of the systemic failings, she said, were known about from "at least 2010". Furthermore, staff testimonies indicated that a "small number of powerful leaders" had "infected the unit, creating an environment in which bullying was normalised, speaking up was dangerous and governance was shaped by self-protection". Senior leadership routinely downgraded serious incidents as "unavoidable", preventing families from learning the truth and obstructing necessary changes from being put in place.

Yet although the review shone a light on some very dark corners, it too was hampered by a culture of cover-up. Out of Nottingham's 66 senior executives during the period in question, 31 flatly refused to co-operate with the review, something Ms Ockenden described as "very disappointing". None of the doctors, nurses or senior management involved in this scandal have faced any sanctions. Dr Keith Girling served as medical director of the trust for seven years, on a salary of about £200,000 per annum, yet had "no comment" this week when a BBC reporter asked why he had appeared not to have acted on warnings about crises in care, and declined to engage with the inquiry.

Such stonewalling must not be allowed. Although the Ockenden review, the largest of its kind ever undertaken, exposed an unusually concentrated collapse in the duty of care, the type of failures it reveals are seeded in unsatisfactory maternity services throughout the UK. Yet true lessons derive from full transparency. What went wrong at Nottingham should now be subject to a judge-led, statutory public inquiry, in which all involved are finally compelled to account.

Fatally Flawed

The rejection by MPs of the assisted dying bill is a victory for common sense

Many of those who so avidly support the right of the state to kill the terminally ill by means of lethal injection — those who like to cloak the practice of euthanasia in the sinister euphemism of "assisted dying" — are not themselves ill. They have yet to face the moment when a doctor informs them that the test results are back and their time is limited. They have yet to experience the emotional tumult that comes with such news. Because of that, they are supremely underqualified to press for the deliberate poisoning to death of others by doctors. Ashley Dalton, the Labour MP for West Lancashire, is, however, clearly qualified to offer a view.

Ms Dalton has advanced breast cancer. She lives from scan to scan, not knowing how long she has to live. Yesterday, she made the most moving contribution to the Commons debate that put paid to the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. Moving not because of any emotion on her part, but because of her rationality, her lack of self-pity.

A daughter of Lancashire, Ms Dalton used common sense to demolish the sloppy and dangerous private member's bill before the chamber. Its promoters, she said, portrayed the issue as a choice between a terrible death and an assisted one. That wasn't a choice, but a threat. If such a bill were to be entertained, she argued, it must not be anything less than excellent in protecting the vulnerable.

The bill has done some good. It has highlighted the essential role of the House of Lords as a revising chamber: peers attracted flak for insisting on amendments but were ultimately vindicated. It has also exposed the poor provision of palliative care — the civilised solution to suffering.

A private member's bill is not the vehicle for such a law. A party supporting state killing should be brave enough to put it in its manifesto. One in 20 deaths in Canada is now due to euthanasia. Let's see what British voters think about that.

Comment

Write to Feedback by emailing feedback@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Mistakes aren't a myth but some fashion is just epic

Rob Nash
Feedback

You have only to see my byline picture to know I am a dedicated follower of fashion, so I cannot explain why this column is not devoted more often to the latest catwalk looks. Today I intend to remedy that oversight.

Hania Tauqeer of Bedford wrote to complain that in an article about statement coats — yes, of course I know what those are — "the Erdem x Barbour opera coat is said to have a 'trapezoid' shape. That would be correct if this were an American publication, but in British English it should be trapezium." With some geometric digging I have reacquainted myself with the properties of trapezia and trapezoids in Britain and the US. There is just one problem: I could not reach Erdem Moralioglu to ask him what shape the coat was.

So let us head off to Egypt for a fashion shoot with a heroic cover line. "Please ask the editor of Luxx magazine what 'epic' fashion is," carped Steve Tees of Sussex. "Does it mean the clothes will give the wearer a difficult struggle for many years?" In this case I would support the epic description. The 15 photos taken in and around Cairo look as if they involved plenty of travel and must have been hard work for all concerned. Kate Reardon, who edits Luxx, confirmed that the undertaking was "logistically epic". And, she said, "the clothes are some of the finest examples of couturiers' craft — which justifies the word 'epic' as a serious adjective to describe something of great difficulty." Not quite Homeric, perhaps, but in the magical, quick-change artistry, a hint of Ovid.

King of the springers

A report by Rhys Blakely revealed that the mystery of the survival of the small group of dinosaurs now known as birds may have been solved by a palaeontologist who has been studying an ancient feather in a coprolite — that's tyrannosaurus poo to me and you.

Considering they have been extinct for 66 million years, it feels as though there have been a lot of tyrannosaurs about recently. "I keep reading things about T rex," said Tim Hale of Sheffield, "but I have never read anything about how it moved. With its long, strong tail and tiny front legs it clearly looks like a very large kangaroo. What do you think?"

I think I would not like to be chased by that bouncing bad boy — Kangasaurus rex, or is it Tyrannosaurus roo?

Caption obvious?

Genefer Clark of Oxford admitted being a "modern dinosaur" herself, "who grew up when information was gleaned from newspapers and books. The Times was acknowledged to provide a clear view of the world and was the newspaper of record. Photographs had captions with people named from left to right or clockwise from a given point. Now, the naming of names seems to be quite arbitrary.

"On Monday I came across the most uninformative caption I've seen for a long time. On pages 6 and 7 were two photos beside a larger one on the right, where a woman and a man were sitting opposite each other in a studio. The top smaller one was of a man in a street, and the lower one had two men on red chairs. The revolving door of fame turns more quickly now, especially for politicians, so it is difficult to keep up. Assumptions about who is recognisable need to be revised." Ten points if you can guess who they were from Genefer's description. Our caption was marginally less cryptic.

"On Wednesday under a photo of Kristin Scott Thomas was another of two men. The caption gave two names and I assume the one on the left was more likely to be the next James Bond than the one on the right. An inserted '(right)' would have clarified things, if that was indeed Gary Oldman. The Times must continue reporting fairly, accurately and clearly for us, its readers, but also for the students of the future."

The captions Genefer describes did assume too much knowledge. Clarity must come before elegance when we are labelling photographs.

Far from shore

On reading Ben Macintyre's column about Arthur Doodson, the expert on tides who calculated the best time for the Normandy landings, Corinne Simons of Essex was puzzled to see a photo of US troops. "Would it not have been possible to find photographs of the British troops on the beaches? I'm sure we must have had photographers too." We did. Lieutenant Peter Handford, for example, who won an Oscar in 1986 for his work on *Out of Africa*, had made a remarkable record of D-Day four decades earlier.

But there is a reason the best-known photographs of Overlord are by the US press photographers Robert Capa and Robert Sargent (a colourised version of the latter's picture *French Coast Dead Ahead* was the one used in Ben's column). Our man, Eric Greenwood, we reported a few years ago, "must have had mixed feelings as he watched the D-Day landings unfold on Sword, Juno and Gold beaches. The closest he got to the action was a mile offshore. Press photographers had been banned from the British and Canadian beaches." Greenwood's shots from June 1944 are terrific, even if they do not show boots hitting the beaches.

Landing pages

Nine centuries before that came what we might call the Norman landings, captured not on camera but tapestry (or in fact embroidery). Our free guide to the Bayeux Tapestry in Saturday's paper proved immensely popular and we know some readers went without a copy, so we are printing a new batch next month. In the meantime you can have a look at our interactive online version. No trigger warnings but the squeamish may wish, like Harold, to cover their eyes at certain moments.

THE TRAVEL AWARDS 2026

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Win a **dream holiday** *with us*

Tell us about your holiday heroes, from airlines and cruises to tours and hotels, and you could win one of five fantastic prizes to Europe, Greenland, Jamaica and more.

Vote now at **thetimes.com/travelawards**

Proudly sponsored by:

DESTINATIONS
THE HOLIDAY & TRAVEL SHOW

UK residents 18+ only. Ends 23.59 BST October 18, 2026.
See thetimes.com/traveltermsandconditions for full prize descriptions, privacy policy & T&Cs. Promoter: Times Media Ltd.

Britain's view of second helpings has never been shared by the time lords

Tom Whipple

Making Science with Tom Whipple: a new podcast

It was 2013 and, at a meeting in Geneva, things had become ever so slightly heated. On one side was almost all the world. On the other side was, mainly, Britain. And the world's time lords, as they repeatedly insisted they shouldn't be called, were getting quite cross. As they tried to thrash out a new global time standard, vigorously opposed by Britain, there was more than one reference to colonialism. "I want to deliver the bad news," said an exasperated Judah Levine, the US representative, "that Victoria is no longer queen."

Still the UK held out. The dispute? Whether we should end the leap second. Now it looks like time is indeed ticking for the leap second — and it may go earlier than we thought. Not because of diplomacy speeding up, but because of the Earth doing so.

You could be forgiven for not having noticed leap seconds. But anyone over the age of ten has experienced one. On December 31, 2016 you will have counted down to midnight and — unless extremely plugged into the mechanics of the UTC timing signal — popped the champagne cork a second early. That day, as in 26 before, the world's clocks hit midnight and, in servers and satellites, banking systems and military bunkers, a second ticked on and it was still midnight. A leap second had been added.

The reason? Around 1950 we got too good at telling the time. For ten millennia, time meant one thing: the position of the sun. Or, as we only recently discovered, the spin of the Earth. A clock, in turn, also meant one thing: matching the Earth's spin. But then we made clocks more accurate than the Earth. The Earth, in fact, is slowing — every tide is energy taken out of our rotation. Atomic clocks and the Earth inevitably diverge. Yet what, then, is a second? What is time? So, to save our brains overheating, when necessary we add in a second.

This fudge, though, became increasingly untenable. Each leap second caused websites to crash. Satellite systems needed tweaking. Markets got confused. So the world wanted to end them. Britain's counterargument? The sun. Time is meaningless, we argued, without being linked to the sun. Others whispered of other motivations. Such as that, technically, the Greenwich meridian — the centre of time — would be unshackled, drifting away. Worse, the French would eventually get it.

Anyway, time has ticked on, abolition was grudgingly agreed to take place in a decade or so. But now events have forced the time lords to act. Specifically: we are spinning faster. In the long run, the Earth does indeed slow. But in the short run? Deep underground there are swirling eddies and currents of magma. These can move in and out. Like leaning in on a playground roundabout, spin accelerates. So much so it looks as though for the first time we might have to subtract a second. That's something that makes computer scientists very worried. A sort of voluntary millennium bug. So, ahead of time, discussions next month could formally end the practice.

Does that mean Britain has lost? Thanks to the wonders of diplomacy, no. A compromise has been mooted: the leap hour. Why not just wait until we have enough divergence to make an hour? Which makes perfect sense. Until you realise how long that takes. It's like a neolithic council sitting on Salisbury Plain and deciding what henge-based stone calendric systems should look like in 2026. Still, at least we keep our meridian.

This threat to the Left Bank is existential

The haunts of Sartre, de Beauvoir and Wilde are being taken over by rich American and Middle Eastern newcomers

Dominic Sandbrook

GETTY IMAGES

Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre loved Café de Flore, below, but Oscar Wilde cut a lonely figure

To millions of people around the world, including many who've never even been to Paris, the very mention of the Left Bank conjures up images of second-hand bookshops, pavement cafés, polo-necked poets and impossibly elegant women wreathed in cigarette smoke.

Alas, the Left Bank is under threat. Having endured fire, revolution and occupation by the Nazis, it now faces a genuinely existential challenge — an influx of rich American and Middle Eastern newcomers who have driven up property prices so quickly that the impecunious poets of old are being priced out.

All cities evolve, of course, but the thought of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and the Latin Quarter becoming bland, homogenised enclaves of the international super-rich seems especially sad. For as hackneyed as it may sound, there really is no better way to get a flavour of Paris's history and culture than by strolling through the narrow streets south of the Seine and contemplating the passing of the centuries.

Where to start? An obvious answer is the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, founded in the late 6th century by the Merovingian king Childebert I to display the relics he had been given while campaigning in Spain. Originally an abbey, it became the centre of a village, then the heart of a bustling marketplace, with an annual fair attracting traders and visitors from all over Europe.

As the neighbourhood boomed it drew in all kinds of colourful characters, from the Sicilian chef Procopio Cutò, who established the world's longest-running café, Café Procope, in 1686, to the actors of the Comédie-Française, who opened a theatre across the road three years later. It was during the French Revolution, though, that the Left Bank really came into its own politically.

In the early years of the revolution, the streets around the former Cordeliers convent, packed with young lawyers, journalists and artisans, became a hotbed of militant opinion. It was here that Georges Danton co-founded the radical Cordeliers Club, one of the driving forces of the revolution, in April 1790.

Nearby, at 30 rue des Cordeliers, the firebrand Jean-Paul Marat poured out his rage in his newspaper L'Ami du Peuple — until he was murdered in his bath by Charlotte Corday in 1793, a scene immortalised by the painter Jacques-Louis David. Alas, when Marat's funeral was held at the Cordeliers convent, the stench from his rotting corpse was so great that mourners had to douse the floor with vinegar. The fact that, because of his chronic skin complaint, his body was covered with suppurating blisters probably didn't help.

What outsiders often miss about the Left Bank, though, is that for most of its history the vast majority of its residents were ordinary working-class families. Some of its narrow streets were demolished during Baron Haussmann's redevelopment of the capital in the 1860s, which involved builders driving a wide new avenue, Boulevard Saint-Germain, through the heart of the district.

But its artistic, subversive reputation endured. When Oscar Wilde moved to the Latin Quarter in the late 1890s, he told friends he was drawn to its "dens of ill repute". But the image of carefree bohemianism was very misleading. In truth, Wilde cut a disconsolate figure, short of friends and money.

One writer remembered seeing him outside a café one night, a lone, sad figure, watching the rain as the waiters tidied up around him. "This poverty really breaks one's heart: it is so *sale*, so utterly depressing, so hopeless," Wilde wrote from the shabby Hôtel d'Alsace, where he died in 1900.

As this might suggest, there was always a gulf between the area's reputation for bohemian glamour and its physical reality, which was often darker, colder and sadder than outsiders realised. The art nouveau Hôtel Lutetia, now owned by Mandarin Oriental, boasts of having hosted artists and writers such as Pablo Picasso and James Joyce, as well as German exiles in the late 1930s. But it makes rather less of its stint as the headquarters of German military intelligence, the Abwehr, during the Nazi occupation, which its website coyly calls "a solemn period".

After Paris's liberation, the hotel was turned into a repatriation centre for concentration camp survivors. Its website calls this a time of "resilience, compassion and hope". But as the historian Jane Rogoyska points out, contemporary photographs show its dining rooms full of skeletal, haunted figures in striped camp uniforms staring hollow-eyed at the camera. On their faces there is little sign of hope, only suffering and loss.

What of the Left Bank's reputation as the birthplace of French existentialism? Not even the most cynical myth-buster can revise that away. Even so, I wonder whether life at the Café de Flore in the early 1950s, chain-smoking Gitanes with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, would have been quite as fun as we think.

As Sartre recalled, one reason the couple spent so much time there was simply that it was heated by a giant stove, a relative luxury in a city scarred by wartime occupation and postwar austerity. And once existentialism became fashionable, Sartre and de Beauvoir began to resent the hordes of visitors gawking at them as if they were animals in the zoo. First they moved down the street to Le Montana. Then, pursued by his literary admirers, Sartre abandoned the area completely, moving south to Montparnasse and leaving Saint-Germain to the growing numbers of American tourists.

Even so, it is a shame to think that the streets where Danton, Marat, Picasso and Sartre once ate, drank, slept and quarrelled are now dominated by trust-funded Americans and oil-fuelled Qataris. And if you doubt that all cities will one day look the same, a glance at the map confirms the picture.

At the Odéon metro station, across the road from Procopio Cutò's historic café, around the corner from a statue of Danton and just a few moments' walk from the Sorbonne, there now stands a branch of Starbucks. Google Maps describes it, apparently without irony, as an "iconic coffeehouse". I can't help finding that both comical and a bit sad.

WEEKEND ESSAY

Why Braintree is running low on goodwill for migrant arrivals

Four years ago the Essex town had nine asylum seekers. Now 800 men, soon to be 1,200, are housed nearby. This causes resentment — and fearmongering from 'patriots', write **Fraser Nelson** and **Hodan Sultan**

The first bus of the day arrives in Braintree at around 9am, ferrying about a dozen asylum seekers from their accommodation in what was once RAF Wethersfield. "I'm not racist," says Jamin, who works in a shop next to the migrant drop-off point. "But I disagree with what's happening. It cost me £30,000 to come here from India, I did it legally." His MBA over, he has until next summer to find an employer to sponsor him. Without one: deportation. "People from India pay. But these people pay nothing, stay for free, get food for free and will probably all end up with a British passport." He finds it all hard to take.

This — the unfairness — is a common refrain in this market town, which until four years ago accommodated a grand total of nine asylum seekers. Three years ago, 46 were sent to the military base seven miles away. As ministers tried to move people out of hotels, that number rose to 580, then to 800 and now 1,200 are planned. All of them are men. With not much to do in the base, buses are laid on for visits to nearby towns. Small groups of men mill around Braintree; harmlessly, but noticeably.

It has leapt to national attention thanks to so-called "auditors" — activists who film the men on smartphones then post to social media. When the asylum seekers went to collect items handed out by the local Salvation Army, the "auditors" were waiting on the other side of the wall, filming and taunting them. The footage went viral: held up as an example of free clothes, phones and accommodation being given to illegal arrivals while locals are ignored. Tommy Robinson, Britain's rabble-rouser-in-chief, was at a march in the town square. Out of nowhere, a perfect storm has been created.

To anyone arriving in Braintree, the most visible sign of change isn't the migrants but the flags. The walk from the station to the town centre looks like The Mall during a Jubilee weekend — the difference being that these are cheap flags, often frayed, fly-posted halfway up lampposts. It's a classic populist trap. Anyone who objects is told this is a patriotic celebration. Raising the colours! What's not to like? But many others see in the flags another message. That a new force is in town, and a more muscular style of politics.

"I hate the flags," says Karen Costa, a retired nurse who has lived here for seven years. "They're saying it's about being proud to be British. No, it's racism underneath. They're playing on people's fears." It's illegal to pin flags to lampposts and a petition to remove them has been signed by 2,100 locals. But the new Reform UK council rejected it, saying doing so would be a waste of money. To some, this is a refreshing defence of patriotism. To others, like Costa, it introduces a new, menacing vibe to the town.

More could be to come. After winning Essex county council in May, Reform UK has now announced its own security guards in Farage-turquoise yokes. They're being deployed, it says, "in response to community concerns regarding the gatherings of men who are resident at the base". They'd be deployed in Braintree, Colchester and Chelmsford. Local police issued a statement saying crime is falling in all three town centres. But this is about politics, about establishing a new sense of order.

It may be stoking fear. But no one can deny there's genuine fear to stoke. Sam Rixon is a charity worker, sympathetic to the general plight of refugees. "But they're all men. And when they're outside, near the bus station, they stand in big groups. As a woman on your own, that can be a bit offputting. I pull my bag closer to me." A former firefighter, she said, was sleeping rough locally and it took the council ages to house him. Small boat arrivals seem to face no such delays. "I don't blame the migrants. I blame the system."

Charles Aldridge, standing outside Tesco in the town square, says the country is seeing an "invasion" of "fighting-age men" and that his granddaughter now won't visit the town centre through fear of the new risks. "There's an HMO [flatshare] up Mount Road where they were living. A young girl got lured there and got raped."

There was a report of a rape on Mount Road in April. Police said the man arrested wasn't living there and was unconnected to the Wethersfield base. But there were plenty of reports to the contrary on social media, posted by the "auditors" who present Braintree as a new frontline stalked by fear. In an era where far more people get their news from social media than any newspaper, this matters.

Goading asylum seekers and turning it into a show is now social-media showbusiness, with serious money. The biggest channel, Auditing Britain, has 200 million views on YouTube built over 16 years filming police stations and, lately, small-boat arrivals. Paying members watch each film before the public does, so spectacle pays. Beneath every video sit Amazon links to the kit: spy camera glasses, phone grip, "identification letters". It could all be worth as much as £250,000 a year. The latest act on the "auditor" scene is Danny Tommo and his masked men. They film themselves challenging boat landings and blocking coaches carrying asylum seekers. For such spectacles, members pay £8.99 a month. His livestreams from Dover and Portsmouth have been watched more than a million times. The protest is the product.

Tommy Robinson leads an anti-migrant protest in Braintree in January and, top right, a poster for Reform UK's security patrols in three Essex towns. Below, migrants on board an RNLI lifeboat in 2023 after being rescued in the English Channel. Right, Reform's party leader, Nigel Farage

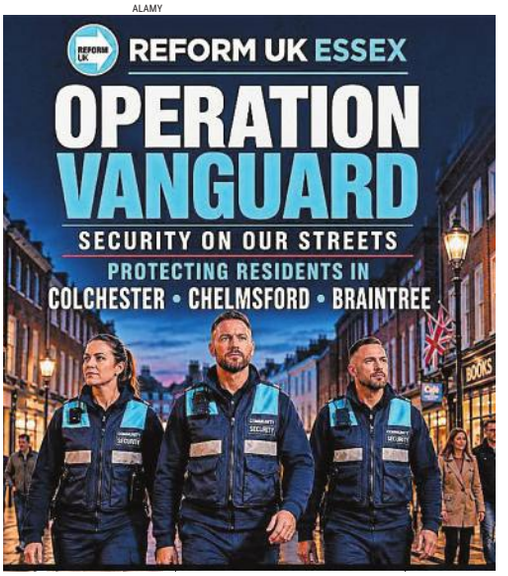
Such videos pack a political punch that no policy can match. And Reform can quite rightly say the small-boat problem started under the Tories. When Sajid Javid was home secretary in 2018 he was called back from holiday to deal with a "major incident" of just 40 arrivals in small boats. Trivial compared with what was to come. Successive prime ministers found the issue was not the practicalities of guarding the sea border but laws that oblige them to escort, rather than deport, anyone who arrives claiming asylum.

The legal basis behind all of this is the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, which obliges signatories to accommodate, not deport, anyone with a "well-founded fear of persecution". For decades, this hardly made any real impact on British life but today, with millions on the move, it's transformative. Former Labour home secretaries, including Jack Straw and Lord Blunkett, have urged Britain to reform the asylum laws, declare our own terms and strike a new settlement. But Sir Keir Starmer, who had a reverence for international treaties, hesitated. Andy Burnham has given no indication what, if anything, he will do.

Changing the law would certainly be an effective tool. Albanians accounted for one in four small-boat arrivals but that collapsed to almost zero when a deal was struck to send them back. When there is a serious risk of deportation, the £2,000 cost of the crossing ceases to be an economic proposition. But changing the law means difficult discussions, confrontations and (as Rishi Sunak found out) the risk of humiliating failure. So far, Labour has seen the status quo as the lesser of two evils.

At Memhas, a coffee shop in the town square, Roger Frampton says the foreign and domestic problems are

ALAMY



now colliding. "We've got lazy so-and-sos in this country who should get off their backsides and work. But they seem to be better off on benefits than working, so there's no incentive for them to work," he says. "We have a lot of immigrants working in the National Health Service. If it wasn't for them, we'd have even bigger problems." But the way the small-boat arrivals are being handled, he says, is just madness. "They just come into town and hang around. It's obviously difficult for them to integrate. Single young women might feel a little threatened by their presence. Especially when you've heard about these grooming gangs in Yorkshire. Unfortunately, they tend to be tarred with the same brush."

Unfair, he says, but understandable — especially in a system where locals are not told who is here and why, and feel they're having to pay. "They're taking more tax to pay for things. I'm now getting less from my pension because they have frozen the tax threshold. I'm actually worse off. I'm paying more, but there's people here who need help. And they're not getting it." Pensioners in the village of Wethersfield, next to the base, he says, struggle to come to Braintree because the local bus route has been cancelled. So it's grating to see asylum seekers given a regular, air-conditioned shuttle bus.

Town centre scarred by lockdown

Braintree is hardly a poor town; its suburbs are beautiful and booming. But the town centre is full of signs of neglect, bargain stores and vape shops. The large pub in the town square is boarded up, plastered with posters claiming (rather implausibly) that it contains live-in security guards. "The town has never recovered from lockdown," one man tells me. "I only come in when I have to. It's become a Formula 1 for mobility scooters."

As we stand in the square recording a film for The Times, a woman on such a scooter sweeps behind shouting "Braintree says no!" We stop to speak to her. Janice Gregory is pleased to hear about Reform UK's offer of security guards, saying she's already seen migrants talking to young girls. Neither she, nor anyone I spoke to, has seen any migrant criminality. But to her, the problem is more a potential threat from a new culture that police aren't geared up to understand or intercept.

Ms Gregory is hardly a Little Englander. She ends our conversation saying she has to go home to look after a Ukrainian refugee she has been housing for the past three years who now has cancer. To her, it's not about whether refugees should be accepted, it's which ones and on whose terms. And whether local concerns should be taken seriously or dismissed as racism.

It's not hard to see which side of the divide John Fennell is on. Dressed in a Union Jack hat and tie, he says he feels the country's culture and values have come under attack. He also speaks about "fighting-age" men. Like others, he says a major part of it is that they don't know who is in Wethersfield and why. "They don't mix. Perhaps they can't speak the language. But how did anyone think it was a good idea to send them here in this way?"

Almost everyone in town seems to mention the lack of transparency: who are these people? And if 98 per cent of them arrive with no passport, how are we to tell? Language is an obvious barrier, but the arrivals also have good reasons to stay away from people with cameras and questions, so their side of the story is seldom heard. When one of us (Fraser) tried to speak to them, there was no luck at all. The other (Hodan, a Somali-speaking apprentice at The Times) made more progress.

No one would think Nuur Jama Mohammed was a refugee. Smartly dressed in jeans and a white Henley shirt, he was waiting for an optician's appointment outside Vision Express. The only hint of his status was the language he was using on the phone (there aren't many Somalis in Braintree). He was a student in Mogadishu but ended up on the wrong side of the al-Shabaab militia. This led him to a year-long journey that ended in a small boat crossing this year. He says he's financially self-supporting as an internet money trader.

At the bus stop Mehmed, a Turkish web designer, was happy to talk. He studied at a *dershane*, an after-school cramming centre for university hopefuls. It was run by the Gulen movement, a religious group that was a major force in Turkey until it was blamed by President Erdogan for the failed coup against him. Its alumni were among those rounded up in the resulting crackdown that has put 10,000 in jail and sent far more into exile. Most went to Greece, many to Germany but Mehmed, 24, chose England. With legal routes closed, he said, the only way he could get here was by small boat.

> "Braintree has its own homeless, who don't seem to be offered accommodation — the sense is of 'fairness' being stretched to the limits of toleration

Welcoming to productive migrants

Osman, 21, regards himself as a skilled worker waiting to contribute. "But I need papers," he says. He shows a video of himself working as a welder in Guinea. Such skills are certainly needed here; welders are on Britain's official worker-shortage list. But no asylum seekers can take paid work until their status is approved. He says he was fleeing an abusive father: a story that may not cut ice in the asylum courts. He says he was recently transferred from Croydon, which he preferred: "The people here aren't so friendly."

By most standards, Braintree is incredibly friendly. It's a town where coffee shop baristas greet customers by name and the stationmaster does the same with commuters. All of them seem to know the name of Zeus, the station cat. It's a place that would, in other circumstances, be very likely to welcome new, productive and taxpaying migrants. Jamin, the shop assistant at the station, said he shares a flat with three other Indians and the locals could not be more welcoming. The stationmaster is from County Clare in Ireland and says people forget just how, once, Irish immigrants were seen as the foreign threat. "But it's not really about them," she says. "The country just feels broken at the moment."

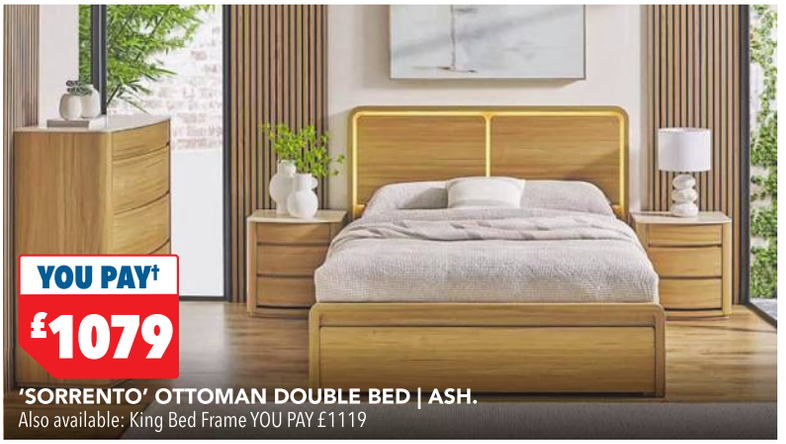
And this is, perhaps, the main point. The system is working perfectly for asylum seekers but not so well for places such as Braintree whose people feel overtaxed and underserved. It has its own homeless, who don't seem to be offered £160-a-night accommodation. The sense is of a definition of fairness being stretched to the limits of toleration.

A common theme in Braintree is that Britain needs an Australian-style points-based system where people are admitted on what they can bring. This is precisely what we have. As people like Jamin know all too well, the legal route is a high bar to cross. Net migration is now 80 per cent below its peak; the queue for initial asylum rulings is down 60 per cent (although appeals have surged. But whatever progress is being made on border control it is easily eclipsed by small boats. Every single arrival represents a success for people smugglers and a failure for the system.

Andy Burnham has the power to change things. A prime minister with a large majority can enact whatever legal reforms he likes, to forge an asylum system that is fit for the challenge of a new era with millions on the move. To do so would bring no end of political headaches. But failing to do so will leave the field to those offering much harsher answers.

Harvey Norman®

HOME APPLIANCES | TVs | COMPUTERS | MOBILE PHONES | FURNITURE | BEDS AND MATTRESSES



'SORRENTO' OTTOMAN DOUBLE BED | ASH.
Also available: King Bed Frame YOU PAY £1119

ALSO AVAILABLE

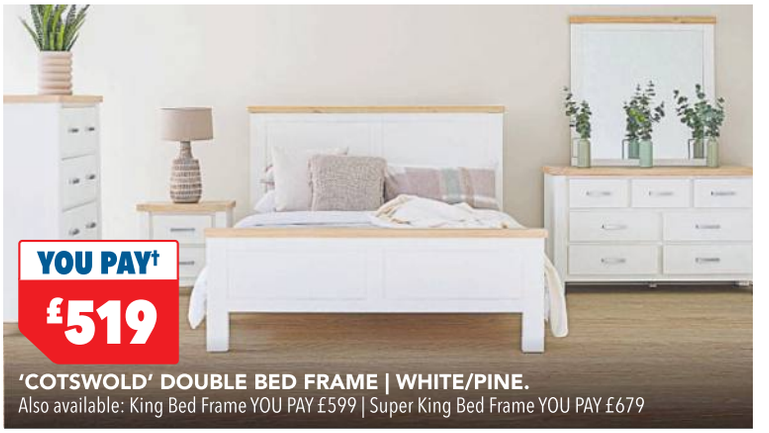
'Sorrento' 5-Drawer Tallboy | Ash.
£1149

'Sorrento' 3-Drawer Bedside Table | Ash.
£449

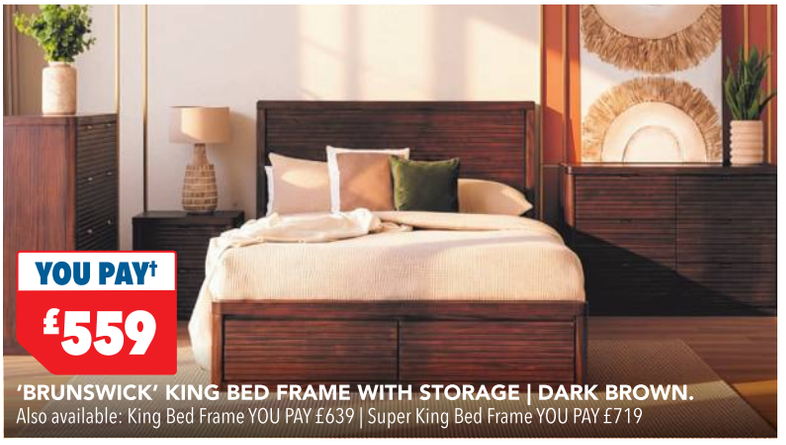
ALSO AVAILABLE

'Cotswold' Bedside Table | White/Pine.
£199

'Cotswold' Chest | White/Pine.
£649



'COTSWOLD' DOUBLE BED FRAME | WHITE/PINE.
Also available: King Bed Frame YOU PAY £599 | Super King Bed Frame YOU PAY £679



'BRUNSWICK' KING BED FRAME WITH STORAGE | DARK BROWN.
Also available: King Bed Frame YOU PAY £639 | Super King Bed Frame YOU PAY £719

ALSO AVAILABLE

'Brunswick' 6-Drawer Dresser | Deep Brown.
£699

'Brunswick' 4-Drawer Chest | Deep Brown.
£699

SLEEP-TEMBER

Better sleep. Better days. A month dedicated to sleep hygiene and wellbeing.

554001_P01_GBR

Mattress sale offers end 14/09/2026. 20% off promotion offers end 28/09/2026. *Terms and conditions apply. Finance is subject to credit assessment and not guaranteed. Harvey Norman Trading (UK) Limited (registered office: Units 14–20 Gracechurch Shopping Centre, The Parade, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1PD) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) under firm reference number 1013915 for credit broking and is a credit broker and not a lender. Lending criteria, terms and conditions apply. Credit facilities are subject to repayment capacity and financial status and are not available to those under 18 or over 80 years at time of application. Finance provided by Creation Consumer Finance Limited which is authorised and regulated by the FCA as a lender under FCA firm reference number 311518.

UP TO 36 MONTHS INTEREST FREE*

ON FURNITURE, BEDS & MATTRESSES

WHEN YOU SPEND £1,500 OR MORE

0% APR

Borrowing more than you can afford or paying late may adversely affect your financial status and ability to obtain credit. Penalties for late or missed payments apply.

CASTLE BEDS

SAVE £20
WAS ~~£249~~
£229

'POCKET DREAM' DOUBLE MATTRESS.
Also available: Single WAS ~~£179~~ NOW £169 SAVE £10
King WAS ~~£289~~ NOW £259 SAVE £30

800 POCKET SPRINGS
3 YEAR WARRANTY

Silentnight

SAVE £200
WAS ~~£599~~
£399

'SILVER' DOUBLE MATTRESS.
Also available: Single WAS ~~£499~~ NOW £299 SAVE £200
King WAS ~~£699~~ NOW £499 SAVE £200
Super King WAS ~~£799~~ NOW £599 SAVE £200

800 POCKET SPRINGS
5 YEAR GUARANTEE

Sleepeezee

SAVE £250
WAS ~~£1099~~
£849

'ORTHO LATEX PLUSH' MOTION DOUBLE MATTRESS.
Also available: Single WAS ~~£899~~ NOW £699 SAVE £200
King WAS ~~£1249~~ NOW £999 SAVE £250
Super King WAS ~~£1499~~ NOW £1199 SAVE £300

1600 POCKET SPRINGS
10 YEAR GUARANTEE

Sealy Posturepedic

SAVE £500
WAS ~~£1999~~
£1499

'CORVUS' MOTION DOUBLE MATTRESS.
Also available: Single WAS ~~£1699~~ NOW £1249 SAVE £450
King WAS ~~£2299~~ NOW £1799 SAVE £500
Super King WAS ~~£2899~~ NOW £2099 SAVE £800

UNICASE XT
POSTUREPEDIC SPRING
7 YEAR GUARANTEE

YOUR BEST
SEPTEMBER
STARTS AT NIGHT

20% OFF
BED FRAMES
with same size mattress†

Proudly supporting sleep health awareness this September.

Harvey Norman®

MERRY HILL SHOPPING CENTRE
Brierley Hill, W. Midlands,
DY5 1QX | 0121 630 1590

FREE STOREFRONT PARKING

GRACECHURCH SHOPPING CENTRE
Unit 14-20 The Parade
Sutton Coldfield, W. Midlands,
B72 1PD | 0121 823 0590

NEW STORE IN SUTTON COLDFIELD

554001_P02_GBR

Penalties for late or missed payments apply. For full terms and conditions visit harveynorman.co.uk/finance. †Discounted item must be of equal or lesser value, prior to discount, than full-priced product purchased. Discounted item and full-priced item must be purchased in the same transaction. Terms and conditions apply. See in store for details.

‘We are trapping our young people

Alan Milburn, the Labour adviser, says that those who can work should face welfare cuts if they refuse help to do so, **Steven Swinford** writes

Alan Milburn does not hold back. The welfare system, he says, is an example of “total state failure” and has become “morally indefensible”. Instead of providing a safety net for people in need it has become an “elephant trap” that is “ruinous” to their life chances.

Milburn, a former Labour health secretary, is putting the finishing touches to his review into Neets, the nearly one million young people who are not in education, employment, or training.

He views it as far more than a standard government review, describing it as a “manifesto for change” that will provide “answers across the system”.

The challenge is monumental and increasingly feels intractable. The failure of successive governments, both Conservative and Labour, to reform welfare led to an explosion in the number of claimants and the cost of the system.

Take personal independence payments (Pip) — disability benefits paid to people irrespective of whether they are in work. The amount spent on Pip has nearly doubled from £16.3 billion in 2019-20 to more than £27.3 billion in 2024-25, and is forecast to hit £41 billion a year in 2029-30. There are more than four million claimants.

Milburn, however, is not deterred. “It almost feels like, ‘Oh my God this is an impossible task to deal with,’ ” he says. “I don’t take that view. I’m more optimistic now about being able to get this problem solved and deal with the challenge than at any point since we started the process.”

His optimism is born, in part, from what he diplomatically describes as the effect of “renewed political leadership” under Andy Burnham.

“The prime minister is 100 per cent behind this. He is deeply committed to it,” he says. “Every time I have a conversation with him he’s incredibly positive and up for change.”

Milburn also believes that Britain can learn from elsewhere. He is speaking shortly after a visit to the Netherlands with Sir Gareth Southgate, the former England football manager, who has taken a personal interest in the matter. The Netherlands has a Neet rate of 4.8 per cent compared with 13.6 per cent in the UK.

“You’ve seen countless examples of initiatives, programmes, policies that are being carried out and that are having an impact,” he says. “Others are solving it. And frankly, if Holland can hit a Neet rate of 5 per cent we’ve got to ask ourselves the question — why can’t we do that?”

But for all Milburn’s positivity, what comes next will be far from straightforward. As he has developed his thinking, he has come to view the benefits system as a “deal” between the state and young people — one that no longer works for either party.

Part of his prescription is uncontentious: the state should do more to help young people find work. One of the most stark statistics in his interim report was his finding that for every £25 spent on benefits only £1 is spent on employment support.

That, he says, needs to change. The state must provide people with more opportunities to get work, training and apprenticeships. That suggestion has already been broadly welcomed by Labour MPs.

But on the other side of the ledger he says that young people must take advantage of what they are being offered or face real consequences.

“There’s a deal,” he says. “And the deal is that as the opportunities increase so must the obligations, because otherwise we will end up with a situation where more and more young people are consigned to a life on benefits. And young people have an obligation to engage with that. And I know that sounds like tough love. But tough love is what is needed here.”

For Milburn the statistics tell their own story. Less than half of the benefit expenditure on those aged 16 to 24 has any work-related requirements attached to it.

The number of out of work young people who receive means-tested benefits with no requirement to engage with employment support had doubled from 160,000 in 2019 to 300,000 at the end of last year.

Milburn says that the state has an “absolute obligation” to provide for those with “severe and enduring disabilities” that prevent them from working, with no strings attached. But for others who are on health and disability benefits and can work, he argues that there should be a “duty to engage”. He says: “At the moment what we’re doing is basically saying to a near majority, ‘Oh it’s fine’. It’s the state at its worst. A total state failure. Obviously apart from those with severe and enduring disabilities all financial support for young people should have support attached to it to get into work and training and should have requirements attached to it.”

At present, people on the standard employment element of universal credit can be sanctioned if they fail to look for work. But for the growing numbers who are long-term sick or disabled — on either the health element of universal credit or personal independence payments — there is no such requirement.

Milburn says that the time has come to “stop pussyfooting around”.

He argues that Britain, like other nations in Europe, needs an ultimate backstop where people who are capable of working but refuse to engage with support — such as young people with mild ADHD or anxiety — have their benefits reduced. He envisages this measure as a “last resort” to happen only very rarely.

He says: “If you over-rely on the big stick all that does is just deter young people. Tens of thousands of people prove every single day that because

Alan Milburn at 42 Belgium, a tech

on benefits. It's not what they want'

TOBY SHEPHEARD FOR THE TIMES

campus in Antwerp, during a trip to see how other countries are helping Neets

you've got a disability, a health condition or diagnosis ... they disprove the theory that you can't work because they do."

However, he points out that it is common in Europe to reduce benefits if people fail to engage with the system.

"These systems here were created by progressive politicians," he says. "They weren't created by people at the reactionary end of politics, they were created by progressive politicians for a very simple reason, which is that people realised in the 1940s and the 1950s that the worst life chance was the one where you weren't able to be in work. Because it was ruinous to your life chances.

"And somehow or other we've lost our way, we've lost our guiding philosophy that it should all be about making sure that everybody has the opportunity to progress in life. People are being gifted the reverse, which is the opportunity to stagnate in life."

The state, Milburn says, has a fundamental right to take a tougher approach. "In the end does the state have a right to say, 'Well, hold on a minute, we've increased the opportunities and we've increased the support and therefore there's an obligation on you to take advantage of that?' Yes, and if young people don't, then, of course like everywhere else, there's got to be a regime that says, 'Sorry, if you're not prepared to play ball then we can't play ball with you.'"

His view has been informed by the fact that the vast majority of Neets (84 per cent) want to work. "It's not that young people are lazy or feckless or have lost resilience or are soft snowflakes," he says. "It's the complete reverse of that. They're frustrated and they want to get on with their lives and they're aspirational and creative. It's not that they want to be on benefits. They don't."

Milburn believes there should be a crossparty consensus on the issue. "I would hope that on this stuff, frankly, all the political parties are aligned. All the political parties should be saying we should do everything we can to maximise what the state does in order to get young people into work".

Alan Milburn

Curriculum vitae

Born January 27, 1958

Education John Marley School, Newcastle upon Tyne; Stokesley Comprehensive, North Yorkshire; read history at Lancaster University. Began a PhD, but did not complete it as he became "ensnared" by left-wing politics.

Career MP for Darlington (1992-2010). Chief secretary to the Treasury (1998-99) and health secretary (1999-2003). Reported on child poverty and social mobility and chaired the Commission on Social Mobility (2012-17). Chancellor of Lancaster University and chair of the Social Mobility Foundation.

Family Married with two sons.

Quick fire

Andy Burnham or Sir Keir Starmer? Andy Burnham. Because he's got clarity, he's got energy, he brings hope.

Sir Gareth Southgate or Thomas Tuchel? Gareth Southgate. He's my mate and he gets it. He's one of the most decent people you'll ever meet.

Spending money on benefits or spending money on employment support? Get away, no shit. Obviously I want to spend more money on employment support.

Work or welfare? Work, every single time. Simple.

He is baffled as to why there is such controversy about talking about benefits being conditional in the UK. "It isn't controversial [in Belgium or the Netherlands]," he says. "But it's controversial in the UK for reasons I don't understand. We're happy talking about welfare state. We're not happy talking about a working state. But a working state has to have some rules. Work beats welfare every single time. I think sometimes with this there's been a bit of pussyfooting around. We've got to engage with the argument here about this. This is uncontroversial in continental Europe. And I'll tell you now it's uncontroversial with the British public."

The rise in the number of young people claiming health and disability benefits has been driven in part by a surge in claims for ADHD and autism, now nearly half of all Pip claims among young people. Add conditions such as anxiety or depression and the group accounts for 64 per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds claiming the payments.

Milburn's interim review raised concerns that the system is "medicalising forms of distress". What does he mean by that?

"People are being pointed towards the diagnostic route," he says. "Once you get the diagnosis you're into the health system, you're on a long waiting list, but you're also entering the welfare system. And once you're in the welfare system, you can't get out. So we're consigning a whole generation of young people who might have ADHD to a lifetime on benefits. If you're in it for 15 years, you're going to be in it for 25 years."

Once people have a diagnosis "it attaches a label to young people". He says: "It becomes about what you can't do, rather than what you can."

He is also concerned about how autism is diagnosed. "Everybody lazily lumps together autism as one condition, but there's gradations of severity. Mild autism is very different from severe autism. There's got to be some recognition both in the health system and the welfare system about gradations of severity, because otherwise you treat everybody the same and not everybody is the same. You're into a diagnose, wait, treat paradigm. And while you're waiting, you're not working, you're tipping into welfare."

Milburn's fundamental concern is that the welfare system is too passive. Pip assessments are often done without a face-to-face interview, which Milburn believes reduces "the human element".

He says: "If we start from my point which is, 'OK I understand you've got a condition, but what would you like to be able to do with your life?' That's not a conversation that can be conducted through protocol. That's got to be conducted through a face-to-face human interaction. It's about the state becoming active, not passive."

TIMES Travel Partner

SIX NIGHTS FROM £499* per person

LUXURY

Lisbon and Porto escape

WITH UNFORGETTABLE TOURS

September 2026 to July 2027

Discover two of Portugal's most captivating cities. Experience the vibrant charm of Lisbon and the elegant atmosphere of Porto — historic streets, stunning architecture and delicious local flavours.

From Lisbon's colourful neighbourhoods to Porto's riverside beauty, this city escape brings together culture, scenery and unforgettable experiences, with five-star accommodation adding a touch of comfort throughout your Portuguese adventure.

Begin in Lisbon, where you can explore the city's famous food scene and wander through its charming streets and historic districts. Continue to Porto and discover its beautiful waterfront, colourful buildings and rich heritage, before venturing into the scenic Douro Valley. With vineyards, rolling hills and picturesque villages, the region offers a wonderful contrast to Portugal's lively cities.

Prices from per month

September 2026 from **£719pp** • October 2026, February and March 2027 from **£549pp** • November 2026 from **£529pp** • December 2026 and January 2027 from **£499pp** • April 2027 from **£619pp** • May 2027 from **£679pp** • June and July 2027 from **£649pp**

*Prices are correct at the time of going to print. The lead price is based on travel in various dates between September 2026 to July 2027. Prices listed are based on two adults sharing a double /twin room/ cabin and departing from a London airport. Single travellers and regional departures are available at a supplement. Tour is operated by Travelodeal Ltd ABTA P8297 ATOL11601, a company wholly independent of News UK.

Our trusted partner travelodeal | ABTA

Price includes

- Return flights from a selection of UK airports
- Six nights at five-star hotels in Lisbon and Porto
- Award-winning Undiscovered Lisbon Food and Wine Tour by Eating Europe
- Internal train transfers between cities
- Douro Valley Tour

CALL TODAY ON

0808 258 4124

thetimes.com/td-lisbon

QUOTE TIMES

Nuffield Health

Flexible payment options **to suit your lifestyle**

Spread the cost of your care with our 24-month payment plan at 0% interest.*

Find out more at
nuffieldhealth.com/hospitals

Trustpilot **4.6** Excellent

Acceptance is subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. Finance is arranged through Chrysalis Finance Limited (FRN 631193). Nuffield Health (FRN 712694) is a broker, not a lender. All parties named above are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. www.chrysalisfinance.co.uk. Nuffield Health does not receive commission for introducing customers to credit.

Our Week The Reform UK WhatsApp Group*

Monday
Nigel Farage Let me finish! This was entrapment by foreign-funded climate activists! It's utterly untrue that we accepted money from overseas!
Richard Tice You tell 'em, boss!
Laila Cunningham But doesn't calling them "foreign-funded" suggest that we did?
Nigel Farage I have been advised by my lawyers not to say any more.
Danny Kruger What would Jesus think?
James Orr Perhaps I can help, as a professor of divinity and ethics.
Nigel Farage Not any more you can't. You and Jukes are out on your ears. And you were only contractors, anyway.
Dan Jukes But I've worked for you for over a decade.
Nigel Farage Big deal, so has my milkman.
Nigel Farage Btw, Arron, can you pay my milkman?
Arron Banks Only if he's the same colour as the milk.
Nigel Farage Bloody annoying. My job wasn't compliance! My job was to have a glass of wine at lunch and shake somebody's hand!
Zia Yusuf Maybe it could be your only job. Just saying.

Tuesday
Nigel Farage And now we've got those hecklers from our conference demanding an apology for being beaten with sticks.
Robert Jenrick Boo-hoo! They had it coming!
Robert Jenrick Guys, I'm experimenting with a departure from my normal likeable persona. How do you think it's going?
Laila Cunningham Should somebody tell him?
Suella Braverman Also, we need a response to these masked, black-clad protesters at Portsmouth.
Nigel Farage Careful on that one. It could be a trap. Political violence is never acceptable.
Robert Jenrick Unless it's against young girls by old men with sticks.
Zia Yusuf Nigel, I disagree. They're just trying to defend our women.
Lee Anderson By hitting them with sticks.
Danny Kruger What would Jesus say?
James Orr That they should throw away their sticks! And walk unaided!
Lee Anderson That lot? They wouldn't make it to the bar.
Suella Braverman Lee, he's talking about Portsmouth. Kemi Badenoch just called them "thugs".
Zia Yusuf Disgusting! They're patriots! Nobody who speaks about them like that should ever be PM!
Nigel Farage Awkward. You can't have seen what I said about them on GB News.
Zia Yusuf No, I did.

Wednesday
Nigel Farage Zia, I can't help but notice you've been undermining me a bit. And it's important we all sing from the same hymn sheet.
Danny Kruger What would Jesus say?
James Orr Oh he'd agree.
Robert Jenrick Yeah Zia. We can all see you jockeying to be the next leader and it's pathetic.
Zia Yusuf Like you've got a hope. Everyone in Britain hates you.
Robert Jenrick That's never held me back before.

Dan Jukes, left, Nigel Farage and James Orr

Nigel Farage I just hope you all realise I was using the Dover protesters to attack Antifa and burqas. Because in Reform's Britain, nobody should wear something that covers their face!
Arron Banks What if it's white and pointy, though?
Matt Goodwin God, this stuff is tricky.

Thursday
Suella Braverman OK, now they're protesting outside the Daily Mail. The main guy is demanding they buy his mother a house.
Nigel Farage They're mad. Imagine thinking somebody else should buy you a house!
Zia Yusuf Remind me how you paid for that one in Clacton?
Nigel Farage None of your damn business.
Nigel Farage But we're doing it again. Getting bogged down in infighting and controversy. We still need to win the public over.
Lee Anderson Trump has the right idea. He's offering everyone $5,000!
Richard Tice Haven't you been listening? We can't take money from America.
Nigel Farage Lee, I know people. If you need five grand, just ask.

Friday
Nigel Farage A terrible week! We're getting completely beaten up.
Robert Jenrick Boo hoo!
Robert Jenrick Wait sorry, I didn't read that properly.
Nigel Farage Plus there's this damn police investigation. Over a lunch when I wasn't even listening! Things were going well before that. It's grit in the oyster.
Zia Yusuf Which one? You had six.
Nigel Farage I just hope the policies are cutting through. Particularly the one about how we'll all resign after 100 days if we haven't fulfilled our promises.
Richard Tice Great policy, boss!
Zia Yusuf Yeah. But why wait until then?
**according to Hugo Rifkind*

Gatwick robots make off with cars, to park

Ed Halford

The scenario will be familiar to many: having left home late, the drive to the airport ends in a desperate search for a parking space. While the queue to get through security is getting longer.

Between tight spaces, worries over vanishing belongings and the cost, airport parking is rarely stress-free. Gatwick, however, believes it has a high-tech solution: Britain's first robotic parking service.

Since August, passengers have been able to pull into a designated garage, scan a QR code, unload their luggage and head to departures. The rest is handled by three unnamed robots moving at about 9mph. Equipped with ten sensors, the Stanley Robotics machines take turns lifting vehicles, moving them to the car park and placing them side by side.

Fissha Teklon, 37, from Twickenham, tried the service before flying to Sweden for six days. "It makes it a whole lot easier for me than looking for spots to park in, and it's easier leaving the car in a garage as I then know it will be taken care of," he said.

He thought it would be "fun to try", adding: "You're putting your trust in a robot and that's a bit odd, but at the same time you're leaving your car in a garage with the key in your pocket."

Gatwick's parking robot takes cars to spaces while drivers head off

The price was attractive, saving him roughly £46 over other options.

Flight numbers are logged and customers' returns tracked. In the event of a delay, the robots hold off on returning the vehicle for pick-up. Out-of-hours collection can be arranged.

Oliver Bedford, 37, Gatwick's head of access, marketing and products, said: "With anything new there can sometimes be some uncertainty and a bit of hesitation. I think that when people have tried it, used it and it's a slightly more mature product ... [we] will become more comfortable."

Stanley Robotics staff oversee the service, although Bedford expects that eventually only a few will be needed. He stressed that more than 40,000 regular parking spaces remained in and around the airport, and no one had lost their job.

The automated parking area fits 20 per cent more vehicles than in standard self parking. Aurélien Cord, 50, co-founder of Stanley Robotics, said: "Humans make mistakes but robots make fewer mistakes ... and if they make one mistake then you can correct it and you'll be sure they won't do it again."

The parking area is closed to the public so it is unlikely that a car is accidentally scratched or dented.

But the system is not without its problems. One Audi's siren could be heard blaring as it was towed — in some cases sensitive alarms are activated. Cord said they normally stopped once the robot released the vehicle. Drivers of some models are encouraged to deactivate alarms.

For now, cars can be dropped off only between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, and trips must be at least five days. This is expected to change.

After dropping off a car customers often waited to get a glimpse of a robot towing it away, Bedford said.

Heathrow named its autonomous cleaning robots Fleetwood Vac and Meryl Sweep; Gatwick staff have suggested Peter Parker, SpiderMan's alter ego. Bedford is thinking of asking the public for ideas. Heathrow ended up with a robot named Cleany McCleanface, however, so he may wish to proceed with caution.

Explore. Plan. And now book with The Times.

The Times and Sunday Times is a unique and trusted source of travel inspiration. Now you can trust us to take you there too.

Call 0808 231 5090 or visit thetimes.com/holidays

TIMES Holidays

World

West Bank is ours: settlers will not let sanctions stop them

In a land infused with blood and revenge, trade bans mean nothing, **Marc Bennetts** writes from Shilo

An Israeli settler with an automatic rifle in the winery in Shilo. The winery's owner, Amichai Lourie, believes "nearly all" Palestinians should be expelled from the West Bank

An automatic weapon slung over his left shoulder, the man in the skullcap stood at the counter in the winery in Shilo, an Israeli settlement in the West Bank. His black T-shirt read: "See you in the next life."

Weapons are a common sight in the settlement, which at its closest point is just half a mile from the nearest Palestinian town. "I think every Jew in the world should be armed," said Jesse Kransdorf, an employee, pulling up his shirt to reveal a handgun.

Businesses in Shilo, which sits on a hilltop about 30 miles north of Jerusalem, are among the targets of a trade ban that was announced this week by the British government over what Ed Miliband, the foreign secretary, said was the "ethnic cleansing of Palestinians" by "settler terrorists" in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Miliband also said the Israeli military's attacks in Gaza were likely to be war crimes.

The winery, which was founded in 2005 but has expanded in recent years, produces about half a million bottles annually and exports to Europe, including to Britain. Yet Amichai Lourie, its owner, shrugged off the effects of the British ban. "There's nothing new about sanctions. Israel has been boycotted and sanctioned forever," he said, sitting in front of racks of red and white wine. "If Britain doesn't buy the wine, somebody else will."

Israel has occupied the West Bank and east Jerusalem since the end of the Six-Day war in 1967. Israeli settlements in the West Bank are considered illegal by the international community. The Israeli government rejects that assertion, and the Israeli settler population has tripled in size to 700,000 since 1993.

In June, Route 60, a 146-mile road that runs through the West Bank, was renamed by Israel as the Bible Road.

The entire area around Shilo, as well as elsewhere in the West Bank, is dotted with election posters for Bezalel Smotrich, the leader of the ultra-nationalist Religious Zionist Party.

Smotrich, who is the Israeli finance minister as well as a key security official, is himself a settler. He has said there is "no such thing" as the Palestinian people or Palestinian history and that Palestinians should leave both Gaza and the West Bank.

Lourie, who described Smotrich as a family friend, said that Israel should have "kicked out" every single Palestinian from Gaza after Hamas fighters killed nearly 1,200 people during an armed incursion on October 7, 2023.

He also said "a large majority" of Palestinians should be expelled from the West Bank. When asked where they should go, he said: "I don't care. Push them into Egypt, push them into Jordan, kick them out anywhere, wherever it takes."

Such rhetoric has consequences in the febrile atmosphere of the West Bank, where Israeli settlements and Palestinian homes can be separated by no more than a few hundred metres.

Although the Israeli government insists that only a small minority of settlers carry out violent acts, the United Nations said this month that more than 1,100 Palestinians, including at least 246 children, had been killed by settlers and Israeli soldiers since the start of the war in Gaza. Almost 80 have been killed this year, it said. Settlers involved in violence are rarely prosecuted and Palestinians say that soldiers either participate in or turn a blind eye to attacks.

In Qusra, where six Palestinians were killed in two days by settlers and Israeli troops in 2023, locals have built fences around their homes to provide a modicum of protection, said Abdel Azim Wadi, the mayor. "The settlers attack old people and women. They set homes and mosques on fire and kill sheep and goats," he said.

A short drive away, an imam showed The Times around the charred ruins of the al-Rahma mosque, which locals say was set on fire by settlers on July 26. Tiles containing verses from the Quran lay shattered on the ground, and graffiti sprayed on the walls of the mosque read: "The land of Israel will be redeemed with blood" and "revenge".

"If I don't see, I don't apologise," said Shoshana Shilo, a self-described right-wing Zionist activist who helped found Kedumim, the settlement where Smotrich has his home. When shown western media reports about the killings of Palestinians by settlers, she said: "I don't believe it."

"We believe that God gave this small piece of land to the Jewish people. Why? I don't know. It's the worst place for the Jewish people to live in the Middle East," she said.

In Turmus Ayya, a Palestinian town that is located across olive groves and vineyards from Shilo, a local likened the actions of violent Israeli settlers to the Ku Klux Klan in the American South in the 1950s. "They act with impunity, and they wear masks, so that's the best comparison, I think," said Yaser Alkam, who is the town's spokesman.

Alkam, a semi-retired lawyer who lived in California for 35 years and is a US citizen, flies American and Palestinian flags from the roof of his home. He said that residents had hoped in vain that US flags would act as a deterrent to settlers. "We have a major attack, physical beatings, the attempted burning down of a house, the destruction of a car, at least once a week," he said.

In October, Alkam added, he and other Palestinians were set upon by about 150 settlers armed with sticks and rocks at a nearby olive grove.

"Every week they bring in a new mobile home or container," Alkam said. "This is my land over there, but I haven't been able to access it since 2023. It's going to spread and eventually some settler is going to stand on the roof of my house and say 'this is my home'."

He was speaking just days after Mike Huckabee, the US ambassador to Israel, visited Turmus Ayya. Although Huckabee, an evangelical Christian, has said British sanctions were motivated by "Jew hate", he has also called violent settlers "terrorists".

The sanctions were triggered partly by Israel's approval for the massive construction of homes in the E1 area close to Jerusalem. Smotrich has said that the project will "bury the idea of a Palestinian state".

While the UK's sanctions were met with anger by Israel, both Israelis and Palestinians said they were unlikely to have much effect on the ground. "We probably won't see a huge impact, but it's a symbol, and it's very encouraging. Someone needs to act," said Alkam.

Your enemy is Iran, not Israel, Maurice Glasman, page 31

Middle Eastern Mar-a-Lago is fit for a Trump

On a street where the flowers are always in bloom, the neighbours are the Netanyahus and you can watch the sun kiss the Mediterranean coast, Amir Davidson acknowledges that $210 million is still a lot to ask (Gabrielle Weiniger writes).

It is a lot to ask for a house at any time, says Davidson, who is trying to sell the most expensive property in the Middle East at a moment when the future of the region is far from certain. "It's a very small pool," he explains of the potential buyer for the house known as Bat Sheba's Palace.

Davidson, 28, who served in the Israeli 8200 military intelligence unit before joining the Davidson group, a family-run estate agency, adds: "He'd have to be a billionaire, so either Russian, Ukrainian or Middle Eastern, someone who connects to the style of the estate because it's very unique ... possibly the Trump family. You never know. It's a bit similar to Mar-a-Lago."

He is not wrong. The house has silk-lined walls, 14-carat gold-leaf detailing and marble flooring. The main residence spans 75,000 sq ft and was constructed by artisans flown in from Italy.

Davidson will soon start filming for the Israeli version of the reality television show *Selling Sunset*, though Bat Sheba's Palace on Hadar Street will not be included.

"I rarely talk about our sales," he says, before doing just that. "We do it once in a while, but we like to keep it hush-hush in many cases because of the kind of clients we work with. Confidentiality is key."

The estate, named after the Israelite royal

How Hero of Ukraine saved soldiers in the 'kill zone'
Page 48

The face that launched a thousand tattoos
Page 49

JUSTIN STEWART FOR THE TIMES

consort, is searching for its new king. Bought in 2013 by the Russian-Israeli oligarch Valery Kogan, who owned Domodedovo, the largest airport in Russia before it was nationalised by his old friend turned enemy President Putin, its style is not for everyone.

The property is located in Caesarea, an ancient port city built by King Herod the Great and named in honour of the Roman emperor Augustus Caesar. The area has been targeted by Lebanese militia and Iranian missile fire in recent years and shares coastline with Gaza, where President Trump's plan to build a Middle Eastern Riviera is buried beneath the rubble.

Though they have raised fears among property investors across the Gulf states, the conflicts that have erupted across the Middle East show little sign of affecting Israel, says Davidson. The art dealer Steven Maksin "bought a property sight unseen, just based on our Instagram video, for [£13.5 million] in Netanya, no less", he says. "His friend Bill Ackman also bought a property for approximately the same price in Tel Aviv, and this is all within six months. During a war that is on and off, I think that only shows the strength of the Israeli market and how much it thrives even under such pressure. I think it's also become maybe even a trend that these high-net-worth individuals and families want to show their trust in Israel and in the future of Israel."

Amir Davidson believes a foreign billionaire will snap up Bat Sheba's Palace, with its silk-lined walls and gold-leaf detailing

A study published by the chief economist's office in May showed that buyers from the US, France and the UK accounted for 87 per cent of all residential properties purchased by foreign citizens during the first three months of the year.

All his properties have a bomb shelter and some have an atomic bomb shelter, he adds.

Despite three years of war and recent trade bans Davidson does not see signs of a slowdown.

Pariahs to power? Sweden's radical right on the brink

Sweden
Alex Maxia Jonkoping

Soft-spoken and meticulously courteous in debates, Jimmie Akesson has spent the past quarter of a century striving to charm his way into the Swedish establishment.

There was a time not so very long ago when the head of the radical right-wing Sweden Democrats (SD) was treated as a contemptible pariah, the plausible and lightly stubbled face of a party with neo-Nazi roots.

For more than a decade, he was the only party leader not to get invited to the Nobel foundation's annual banquet in Stockholm's city hall. The broadcasters refused to air one of his party's election adverts because they feared they might get fined for hate speech. However, after the Swedish election today, he may finally become a minister.

For the past four years Akesson and his SD party, the second most popular in the country, have been perched on the brink of mainstream acceptability, propping up a centre-right coalition government from the outside in exchange for substantive influence over its agenda. For much of that time, it also looked as though the party's work would be undone this weekend. The Social Democratic Party, led by the former prime minister Magdalena Andersson, was streets ahead in the polls.

Yet the pendulum has suddenly swung back towards the Swedish right in the days before the vote, giving Akesson a solid chance of entering government for the first time.

In April, he and Ulf Kristersson, the centre-right prime minister, struck a deal where the radical right would be granted ministries in return for supporting Kristersson's efforts to cling on to his job. That would mark a historic turning point in Sweden, which up to now has been the last of the Nordic countries where the radical right was systematically excluded from power.

"We've come quite a long way as a party," Akesson said in an interview with The Times. "We're the second-largest party today and it's clear we're gaining the influence."

Arriving at a campaign rally in Jonkoping, a small university city east of Gothenburg, Akesson was cheered by a crowd, most of them teenagers and many of them chanting his name.

Moments later, Akesson strode on to a makeshift stage and launched into a speech that ranged from promising subsidies for dental care to pledging a further tightening of Sweden's migration policies.

Should the SD come to power, he said, all permanent residency permits would be abolished. Funding for integration would be cut. Migrants would be urged to take responsibility for their place in Swedish society.

This would be another nail in the coffin of what used to be the most liberal embrace of multiculturalism in Europe.

Akesson said this approach had "never worked anywhere" and "merely creates internal divisions".

The party is particularly blunt about the position of Islam, which it regards as incompatible with Swedish and western identity. Outside mosques in cities such as Örebro and Karlstad it has erected billboards with images of full-face veils above the slogan: "This will never become Swedish."

The SD has also issued Arabic-language messaging, including an AI-manipulated video of Akesson in which he invited migrants from the Islamic world to apply for voluntary repatriation grants of up to £28,000 each.

The broader Swedish right still has a stiff battle on its hands to wrest back momentum in the final days of the campaign.

Andersson's Social Democratic party, which until a couple of weeks ago routinely polled at more than 30 per cent, have slipped back to the mid-20s.

The SD has held fairly steady at about 20 per cent of the vote, which would make it the largest party of the right, a few points ahead of Kristersson's centre-right Moderate Party.

One of the battlegrounds is Bjuv, a district of 16,000 people three hours' drive to the south of Jonkoping, deep in the new heartlands of the hard right.

Jimmie Akesson arrived at a rally to a cheering crowd chanting his name

This area was once a Social Democratic stronghold and an industrial centre that used to supply northern Europe with a large share of its frozen peas. Yet the centre-left hegemony has gone the same way as the pea facility, which was shut down and moved to Germany a decade ago, leaving one of the highest unemployment rates in Sweden and an underskilled workforce.

The Social Democrats are on a mission to win Bjuv back. Visiting the district, Ardalan Shekarabi, the party's Manchester-born spokesman for labour affairs, said it was unacceptable an area in such a prosperous country should still be burdened with unemployment second only to Spain's and Finland's in the European Union.

"Unlike other European countries, Sweden has a strong economy. It should not be like this," he said.

Shekarabi said many people, particularly with migrant backgrounds, were worried about Sweden's direction of travel as the power of the radical right waxes.

"The Sweden Democrats aren't actually in government, but they effectively control it, and there you have people who are openly hostile towards minorities and people from immigrant backgrounds," he said.

"It's the first time in Swedish politics that we've seen people in such positions of power expressing hatred towards minorities," he added. "Sweden isn't known for being a country where this sort of polarisation exists."

World

Hong Kong activists behind Tiananmen massacre vigil jailed

Hong Kong
Richard Lloyd Parry Asia Editor

Hong Kong's most prominent female dissident was sentenced to more than seven years in prison for calling for an end to one-party dictatorship, after denouncing the Chinese authorities as following the path of the Nazis.

Chow Hang-tung, 42, who has been detained since 2021, was sentenced to seven years and three months in prison on charges of subversion under Hong Kong's national security law (NSL). She was tried alongside two other leaders of the now disbanded group that organised commemorations of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing.

Lee Cheuk-yan, 69, who, like Chow, pleaded not guilty to charges of subversion, received a seven-year sentence.

Albert Ho, who pleaded guilty on the basis he had no chance of being acquitted, was given a lighter sentence of five years and two months.

The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, the organisation the trio used to head, was fined HK$1.5 million (£141,000).

The ruling confirms what has become increasingly obvious since the imposition of the NSL in 2020, after huge anti-government street protests the previous year — under the law, any challenge to the Chinese Communist Party is a crime in Hong Kong.

"The evidence before the court showed the alliance had persisted in and promoted its ... agenda that included 'end one-party dictatorship' ever since its establishment," the judges at the West Kowloon court said in their sentencing statement yesterday.

"Although the present case did not involve violence or threat of violence, nor had the defendants put forward any specific means of implementation or timetable to carry out 'end one-party dictatorship', the court found that the offence was still of a serious nature."

Many defendants in political cases in Hong Kong courts play down their political convictions in the hope of more lenient sentencing. Joshua Wong, an activist who was convicted last week under the NSL, pleaded guilty and said he had "reflected" on his past actions and their consequences.

Chow, by contrast, has expressed eloquent defiance at every stage.

"It was precisely this unthinking obedience, devoid of the judgment of right or wrong, that brought about repeated horrors under Nazi rule," she said.

She added: "Whether inside or outside prison, I will ... strive to release prodemocracy activists, vindicate the 1989 Democracy Movement, hold those responsible for the massacre to account."

The men were alive. There was no time. I went in ...

Vladyslav Polskyi was awarded Hero of Ukraine after he saved soldiers in the 'kill zone', **Maxim Tucker** writes

VIACHESLAV RATYNSKYI FOR THE TIMES

Lieutenant Vladyslav Polskyi, a former geography teacher, hauled two wounded soldiers on to a pick-up truck in the kill zone in his T-shirt

It had taken three days for the Ukrainian fire team to get behind the Russian positions in the village. Cliff, Ice and Riabchik had stalked through the fields, hugging the treeline and laying low.

A few weeks earlier a trickle of Russian infantry pushed into the outskirts of Kozacha Lopan. The Ukrainians of 1st Company, 2nd Battalion, the 475th Assault Regiment, had been tasked with driving them out.

Kozacha Lopan was once home to almost 5,000 people. It is a tiny settlement only three miles from the Russian border with Ukraine's Kharkiv region. Last week, President Putin claimed to have retaken it. So huge are the Kremlin's losses and so slow its gains, he has become seemingly desperate to announce the smallest victory.

The stakes are high. If the Russians win here, they would use a smattering of houses to launch first-person-view (FPV) drones capable of striking Kharkiv, 28 miles to the south. This could make life in Ukraine's second-largest city, home to 1.4 million people, impossible.

The men ordered to stop them were not professional soldiers. Cliff and Ice, both builders, had been mobilised just six months before the mission. Their company commander, Lieutenant Vladyslav "Teacher" Polskyi, had been a high school geography teacher before volunteering to join the army in 2022.

This account of Polskyi's "selfless courage" under fire, celebrated by President Zelensky as he awarded him Hero of Ukraine, the country's highest military honour, is based on testimony from Cliff, their battalion commander, Polskyi himself, the commander of a supporting unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) platoon, and video of the event obtained by The Times.

It was a scorching day when 1st Company began their mission on August 10. A fire team comprised of Lenin, Husky and Son-in-Law were to surprise and engage the Russians. Cliff's team would provide fire support, then join the fray to clear the village, cottage by cottage.

Lenin's group made contact with the Russians at dawn on August 13. "It was around five in the morning. The Russians were resting," Polskyi recalled. "The first group spotted two under the trees and killed them."

The enemy was out of reach of the company's strike drones, so the team moved in. After taking up a position in one building, they ambushed a second pair of enemy soldiers. Lenin's team shot both dead from five metres.

Cliff's team followed Lenin's into the village, both attacking Russian positions from the rear. As they went house-to-house, they discovered three Russians holed up in one building, he said. Cliff said: "Ice went straight at them and was riddled with bullets." He died instantly. "Riabchik managed to take cover but they began firing at him, and his backpack with the Starlink [communications system] caught fire. They drew the enemy's attention, which gave me a few minutes to take the Russians out."

Another pair of Russian soldiers spotted the Ukrainians, who ran for cover as enemy drones descended upon them. "FPV drones began attacking us. One exploded about ten metres from me. I was wounded and crawled into a patch of vegetation," said Cliff, who had shrapnel embedded in his arm and leg.

Lenin was also hit. He had a flesh wound to his leg and neck. Their comrades managed to stop the bleeding, moved quietly from cover into a building, and waited for nightfall.

Back at headquarters, Chaki, the commander of a UGV platoon, planned an evacuation. One of his vehicles reached the men in the early hours of August 15. Cliff and Lenin were loaded on and headed back to base.

On a dirt track with two passengers, the remotely controlled vehicle was making only about 5mph, meaning that as the sun began to rise the wounded men were still well within the kill zone — the 20-mile strip of land under constant surveillance. Then, two enemy launches were detected. Chaki said: "My UGV operator was sitting right behind me watching his screen. There was no time to think. He ... reacted."

The driver swerved sharply, causing the first drone to strike the vehicle's side armour, protecting the men inside. The second drone overshot ten metres away. Although the manoeuvre probably saved their lives, both were badly wounded. Cliff's foot was torn off and bleeding. The UGV was wrecked.

"I felt helpless. I ordered another UGV out, but ... I knew it would take too long. We knew another enemy drone was in the area," Chaki said.

Suddenly, he saw a grey pick-up truck racing past the second UGV. Lieutenant Polskyi had decided to take matters into his own hands. "When I remember it now, I still get goosebumps," Chaki said. "He drove in and loaded them incredibly quickly. I honestly don't know how he managed to lift them."

Polskyi barely knew the two men, who had been transferred to his command only a week before. Yet as he watched video stream from a drone hovering above, he had realised they would die if left bleeding out.

"I called the commander and told him what I wanted to do," the lieutenant said. "I told him: 'I can do this.' He asked me if I was sure. I told him 'Yes'."

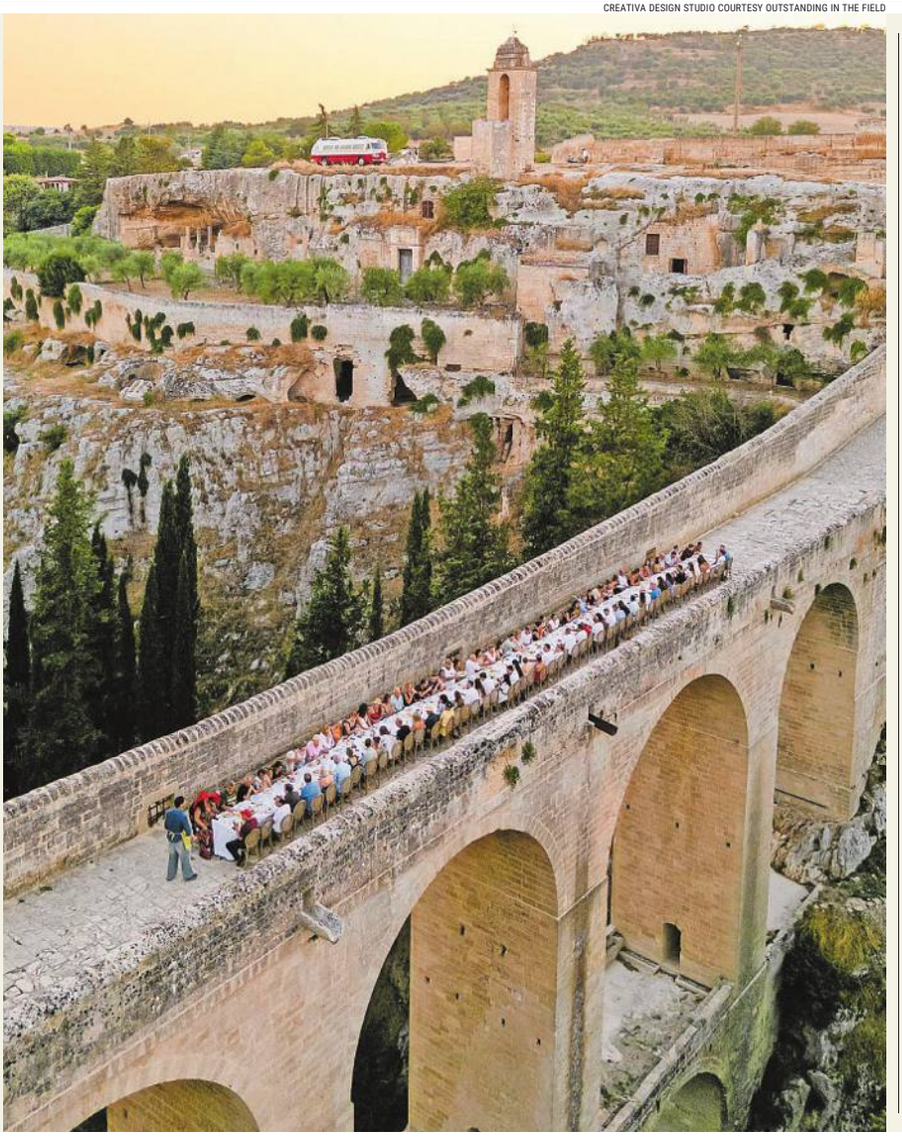
Determined to reach the wounded quickly, Polskyi had not paused to put on his body armour. A drone video of him hurtling into the kill zone and leaping out in a T-shirt to drag the two soldiers on to the truck has become an internet sensation across Ukraine.

Polskyi had driven alone without cover for half an hour inside the kill zone to pull out the two men.

Now, Polskyi is already back at work. He feels awkward about his celebrity status, he said, because he has seen so many acts of bravery. But he has heard feedback from one person who was less than enthusiastic about his actions.

"My wife was relieved when I was promoted to company commander, she thought this type of situation would happen less often," Polskyi said. "When I told her I saved two people, she said 'Well done'. Then she saw the video. 'That's enough,' she said."

CREATIVA DESIGN STUDIO COURTESY OUTSTANDING IN THE FIELD



More than 100 diners paid $390 each for dinner on the bridge from which Daniel Craig cheated death in No Time to Die

It's no time to diet: Bond-bridge banquet leaves Puglia queasy

For the group of thrill-seeking jetsetters who met up in Puglia for a banquet on an ancient viaduct, the evening was foodie tourism taken to a whole new level (Tom Kington writes).

As the sun set on the scene, the 110 well-heeled gourmets dined on local orecchiette pasta with sausage and mushrooms at a trestle table stretching along on the 18th-century bridge spanning a stunning canyon at Gravina in Puglia.

James Bond fans in the mainly American group were thrilled — it was the same bridge Daniel Craig leapt from as assassins closed in on him in the 2021 film *No Time to Die*.

But some locals were left fuming over the dinner, including Saverio Verna, a town councillor, who demanded to see the permits issued for the event and claimed the bridge had been used with no regard for "public safety and respect for our heritage".

As questions were raised about the fine line between rich tourists celebrating local culture and stepping on the toes of the communities there, the dinner was soon a hot topic on national TV, where the commentator Vladimir Luxuria called the $390-a-head event "a bit vulgar".

She added: "They blocked a bridge for rich people who can spend $390 on orecchiette. It was a dinner for a few people on a public monument. I don't like elite tourism and Puglia doesn't need the publicity, everyone wants to go there."

The naysayers were challenged by Fedele Lagreca, the mayor of Gravina, who said that the town did indeed need publicity. Leo Vicino, a city official, told The Times that "the banquet not only made Gravina better known to the world but it was very respectful, since they served up local food".

The bridge was built by the Orsini family who dominated the town for centuries. Since its appearance in the Bond film, Gravina has become a favourite of film directors: Mel Gibson arrived this year to film his sequel to *The Passion of Christ*.

The bridge also caught the eye of Outstanding in the Field, a US company founded in 1999 to serve dinners close to food producers, often in fields, telling its growing army of fans. "Rather than source ingredients for a restaurant, we bring our restaurant to the source," it says. Since then Jim Denevan, its founder, has hosted 1,700 events in every US state and 25 countries, from the pier at Malibu to Mount Fuji in Japan.

He said: "We have never shut any place to the public, that is not part of our values — we are celebrating the area. Local pride can stir a debate about outsiders coming in, and if they say no, we don't do it."

Face that launched a thousand tattoos

Adam Sage Paris
Clara Griffiths

Mélanie Wailcester was scrolling social media when she came across a photograph of a tattoo. It was a woman's face, looking defiant. She looked familiar. It was her own face tattooed on the body of a stranger.

Wailcester, a French streamer with hundreds of thousands of followers on social media, was completely unaware that she had become the muse of tattoo artists around the world. She was 18 when she discovered the first photo in 2018. "I thought, 'F***, it's me'," she said.

Now, her video explaining how her face ended up inked on at least 20 strangers' bodies without her knowledge has gone viral.

"It took me a little while to realise that the person tattooed on to this body was me," she told Le Parisien newspaper. "It was a bit surrealistic. I found it a bit scary because you don't expect that sort of thing."

It all started with a photo of Wailcester on Pinterest, the digital bookmarking platform. The Italian tattoo artist Alex Warhs was looking for inspiration when he stumbled upon the picture.

"I really liked her physical features," said Warhs, who is from Latiano in the Puglia region. He used the face as the basis for tattoos for his clients, but also for a print available on his website.

He was not the only tattoo artist struck by Wailcester's face. The streamer, who makes content about clothes, make-up and her dog, has found about 20 images of herself tattooed on to arms, legs and other bits of anatomy. "Those are just the ones I found," she said in a TikTok video. "Imagine the number of images that I haven't come across."

She said the discovery was all the more troubling since she was only 16 in some of the photographs used by tattoo artists.

Wailcester, who is from Montpellier in southern France, said she had contacted a man who had her tattooed on to his face. "He explained that his tattoo artist hung around on Pinterest a lot and had found a photo of me on the site and took the liberty of doing a drawing."

Lawyers said tattoo artists should have asked her permission and were in breach of her personality rights.

Raphaël Molina, a lawyer specialising in intellectual property, told Le Parisien that under French law "tattoo artists can reproduce someone's image only if they have authorisation." He added: "You can get a tattoo of your partner's face if you have their explicit consent."

Molina said Wailcester could seek damages and ask tattoo artists to stop posting images based on her face on the internet.

There is an exception concerning celebrities, whose images are in the public domain, he said. Tattoo artists can reproduce them at will.

Wailcester is not alone. Brittany Willow, from Austin, Texas, said she suffered a similar fate after posting on social media a photograph of herself made up to resemble Pennywise the Dancing Clown from *It*, the 2017 horror movie based on Stephen King's 1986 novel.

"All of a sudden", she said, she was sent a photograph of a tattoo of "my face on someone".

Mélanie Wailcester was completely unaware that she had become the muse for tattoo artists around the world

"And then a couple months go by, another one pops up, another one," she added. "And then it just turned into a lot of people getting it done." She said it was "weird but flattering".

Lal Hardy, the founder of the New Wave Tattoo studio in London, whose clients include Liam Gallagher, Dave Grohl and Jermain Defoe, said there was nothing new about tattoos that reproduced facial features.

In the pre-internet era, when "anyone who got tattoos was a white, working-class bloke", most were of "sailors or prostitutes", said Hardy, 68.

"The only way you could see an image was if someone else walked in wearing it, it was in a magazine, or someone gave you a picture," he added.

Nowadays, customers have almost unlimited access to photographs of strangers. Hardy said that his studio encouraged customers to opt for artistic creations rather than simple reproductions.

Warhs, for his part, insisted that he had modified Wailcester's face for his works. He said he had sent her a copy because he "thought she would like it".

The artist said the personal rights had become less of an issue since the development of AI, which was able to create the set of features he looked for. There was no longer much need to trawl through platforms such as Pinterest in search of a muse, he said.

World

British backpackers could be sent packing as migration fears grow

Australia
Bernard Lagan Sydney

Some mistakenly thought "Pommie" stood for Prisoner of Mother England, others said it came from pomegranate, which became slang for sunburnt immigrants, or sailors needing fruit to ward off scurvy.

But whatever the origin of Australians' nickname for Britons, the Poms are, increasingly, going down under.

Nearly 75,000 young UK backpackers have travelled to Australia over the past three years, figures showed this week, thanks to a free trade agreement that relaxed travel and work rules for 18 to 35 year-olds.

For every young Australian who heads to the UK, eight go in the other direction on working holiday visas. The more than doubling of the numbers of young British travellers making the trip since before the pandemic has led to an extraordinary imbalance: 30 per cent of all 25 to 29-year-olds and 20 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds in Australia are visitors on temporary visas.

The 2023 Australia free trade agreement increased the maximum length of stay for UK citizens to three years and allowed them to take any job they wanted. It was designed to create "balanced opportunities" between backpackers from both countries, but has prompted a record 74,222 backpacker visas to UK citizens last year — well above the usual 40,000 average before the pandemic. Meanwhile, the number of young Australians heading to Britain actually dropped under the new rules, from more than 10,000 a year before the pandemic to 8,200 in 2025. Backpackers account for 16 per cent of net overseas migration to Australia.

Among those who made the move was Emma Haines, 29, who swapped her job in London to work in one of the most remote outback pubs on the fringe of the Tirari Desert. Haines, a sports science graduate from Wimbledon, southwest London, now lives more than 100 miles from the nearest town.

Although Australia faces significant skill shortages across healthcare, construction, technology, education and trades, politicians are under intense pressure to slash immigration from voters worried about the cost of living. Australia's level of net overseas migration is on track to exceed a historically high 300,000 this year.

Emma Haines swapped Wimbledon for work in an Australian outback pub

The opposition One Nation party is surging in the polls and demanding that annual net migration be cut to 130,000.

UK backpackers may suffer as a result. Tony Burke, Australia's home affairs minister, confirmed last month that working holiday visa applications were being processed "more slowly" in an effort to lessen the numbers arriving.

Annabel Symonds, who runs Londoner in Sydney, an online travel advisory site for travellers from the UK, is seeing a surge in interest. She said: "There's a lot of people wanting to move over here who are ... sick of life in the UK. But ... I see the exact same numbers of people ... considering moving back."

Symonds herself moved from Britain in 2011 to live with her Australian partner, then returned to the UK, regretted it, and went back. "We realised what the UK could offer wasn't what Australia could offer," she said.

ANNA SZILAGYI/EPA

When the cows come home At the Viehscheid festival in Bad Hindelang in the Bavarian Alps, cattle are brought down to the valley, the vast herd is separated and each cow is returned to its owner for winter

Selling Hindu nationalism to the world

The most potent force in Delhi sought friends from the UK to the US, but found only trouble, **Amrit Dhillon** writes

Depending on who you ask, the most powerful person in India is probably Narendra Modi, the combative Hindu nationalist who has been prime minister for a dozen years and seems determined to serve for a dozen more.

Ask Modi, however, and he might come up with another name: Mohan Bhagwat, a 75-year-old who is the guiding force behind the movement responsible for Modi's ideology and much of the country's present condition.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, known as RSS, is a former militia and parent organisation of Modi's party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). It counts senior government officials among its members and is thought to dictate much government policy in Delhi, albeit behind the scenes.

For the first time in years, Bhagwat has emerged from the shadows with a tour of the US, Canada and Britain in what critics say is an attempt to detoxify the reputation of the RSS, a group that has more control over India than any other.

Banned three times since independence, today it has almost five million volunteers who take part in quasi-military drills and seek the establishment of a Hindu state. Its critics, which include the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, say its subgroups have perpetrated and promoted violent attacks against religious minorities, primarily Muslims and Christians.

It was founded in 1925 and runs about 83,000 regular neighbourhood gatherings, likened to Boy Scout meetings, that include physical drills, songs, games and instruction in its account of Hindu civilisation. Its history, however, is etched with infamy. Nathuram Godse, who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi, was a member of the RSS in the 1930s but left to form a more radical group.

Today it has created an estimated 2,500 spin-off organisations, including religious councils, the largest trade union and its biggest private school network. The BJP, founded by the RSS, is the largest political party in the world, claiming 140 million members.

Bhagwat was expected in New York two weeks ago to address 5,000 people to promote "universal oneness". The speech was aimed at countering claims of violence against Muslims within the RSS and was criticised by Zohran Mamdani, the New York mayor, who said the group was "exclusionary". Almost 100 politicians, mostly Democrats, pledged to reject any political donations linked to the RSS.

In Toronto, nearly 270 organisations asked the government to ban Bhagwat and consider designating the RSS a terrorist entity.

In London, where he spoke this week, numerous groups asked the mayor not let him use a municipal venue.

For Pratap Bhanu Mehta, a political scientist, said the group "has to think of a future beyond Modi," he said. "Modi's rise facilitated its growth and it has to ensure it does not sink with him."

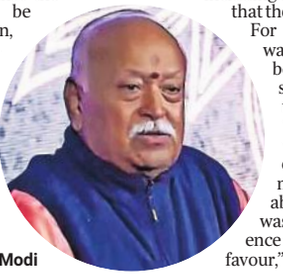
The RSS had portrayed itself as a movement built on sacrifice and discipline, he said. "But the more power it has acquired, the pathologies of normal organisations have begun to afflict it, including careerism and corruption," he said. "It may have to reinvent itself."

When Bhagwat came to London, he was met by protesters accusing the RSS of persecuting minorities.

In Paris another Hindu group aligned with the RSS and Modi was provoking a backlash. The BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha celebrated the opening of the first Hindu temple in the suburbs with a flotilla of boats down the Seine.

But there was trouble when it emerged that a group of priests visiting the Eiffel Tower had asked for female staff to remain out of sight. "In France we will never accept that the presence of women be limited," Marine Le Pen, who will run for president next year, said.

Drawing its beliefs from the teachings of Lord Swaminarayan, a late 18th-century celibate ascetic who is regarded by followers as an incarnation of Vishnu, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha has built temples around the world, including the complex at Neasden.


Mohan Bhagwat is the force behind Narendra Modi

The adverse media coverage was not what Bhagwat intended. Ashutosh Varshney, director of the Saxena Center for Contemporary South Asia at Brown University, said that Bhagwat had realised the RSS needed to improve its standing in the West.

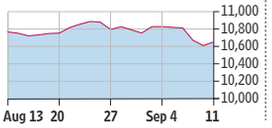
It is often mocked for its beliefs on the medicinal properties of cow waste products and its condemnation of Valentine's Day as example of western decadence. One purpose of the tour was to clear up "misconceptions", including the belief in the West that the RSS hates Muslims.

For this task, Bhagwat was deemed to be the best person. His persona is less abrasive than that of Modi. "None of the major western papers has ever given Hindu nationalism a favourable review. This tour was an attempt to influence public opinion in its favour," said Varshney.

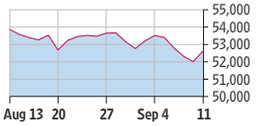
Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
10,650.44 (+41.52) ▲

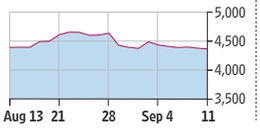


Dow Jones (midday)
52,653.71 (+589.61) ▲

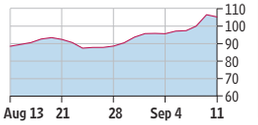


COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,369.92 (-9.53) ▼

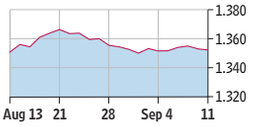


Brent crude (6pm)
$105.09 (-1.61) ▼

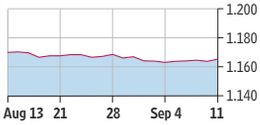


CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.3522 (-0.0008) ▼



£/€
€1.1652 (+0.0015) ▲



World Cup brings home faster growth than expected in UK economy

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The UK economy grew much faster than expected in July helped by the World Cup, record hot weather and businesses stepping up their spending on artificial intelligence.

The Office for National Statistics said yesterday that gross domestic product increased by 0.4 per cent on a monthly basis in July, well above the consensus forecast for no growth. GDP grew by 0.3 per cent in June and stalled in May. On a quarterly basis the economy expanded by 0.4 per cent, signalling an extension of the UK's strong first-half growth performance, which was the best in the G7.

The ONS said that businesses, especially in the hospitality sector, reported a boost in sales thanks to the World Cup. The record hot weather in the month also lifted activity, the statistics agency said.

Liz McKeown, director of economic statistics at the ONS, said: "Businesses reported that the warm weather and Fifa World Cup had affected their activity, although effects differed across industries, benefiting some businesses while creating challenges for others."

July's better-than-expected figures were largely driven by a 0.4 per cent rise in services output. The industry is crucial to the UK economy as it generates about 80 per cent of GDP. Production output rose by 0.2 per cent and construction output increased by 0.1 per cent.

McKeown said that the jump in services output may have been tied to UK businesses raising spending on AI. Computer programming was the largest contributor to services sector growth.

Martin Beck, chief economist at WPI Strategy, said the July data was "a genuinely encouraging result, particularly because some of the strength appears to be coming from investment in the technologies most likely to raise future productivity".

Yael Selfin, chief economist at KPMG UK, said: "Activity in sectors aligned with AI and technology investment bodes well for the chancellor's ambition to raise UK growth momentum, while today's GDP figures also provide a welcome boost for the chancellor ahead of the autumn budget, highlighting the resilience of the UK economy despite a challenging global backdrop."

John Healey said this week that the British economy was in the process of "turning a corner" as he and Andy Burnham face speculation about tax rises in the budget on October 28. The

Continued on page 52

Astra boss cools talk of 'megadeals'

Strategy is to buy small and early, Soriot says

Alex Ralph
Chief Business Correspondent

Sir Pascal Soriot has indicated that AstraZeneca is not pursuing megadeals after a report last month that the company was in talks with Bristol Myers Squibb over a $400 billion tie-up.

In his first public comments since shares in AstraZeneca fell sharply at the start of August over concerns that management was considering a large acquisition to bolster the company's drugs pipeline, Soriot has suggested to City analysts that it is not interested in acquisitions on that scale.

The longstanding chief executive said: "Our strategy has been to focus on small BD [business development], as you could see over the last number of years, because we try to do deals early to build value along the way."

He added: "Our priority is small ones, but if we found something like Alexion, or [one for] $10 billion, $20 billion, that makes sense, we would certainly consider it. Not that those opportunities exist everywhere, as you know."

The company acquired Alexion, a Nasdaq-listed rare diseases drugs specialist, in 2021 for $39 billion in its largest acquisition.

Soriot said a deal that would "make sense strategically, financially, scientifically" would be considered, but added: "Typically, we would really look at a much smaller deal ... something in the range of $20 billion to $30 billion. Again, those are extremely rare."

Soriot was speaking on a call with analysts at the European Respiratory Society Congress in Barcelona this week, where he was pressed to clarify AstraZeneca's strategy on mergers and acquisitions.

Shares in AstraZeneca fell 9 per cent on August 3 as investors questioned the idea of the company combining with Bristol Myers Squibb, the US multinational, and management's belief in the strength of its drugs pipeline.

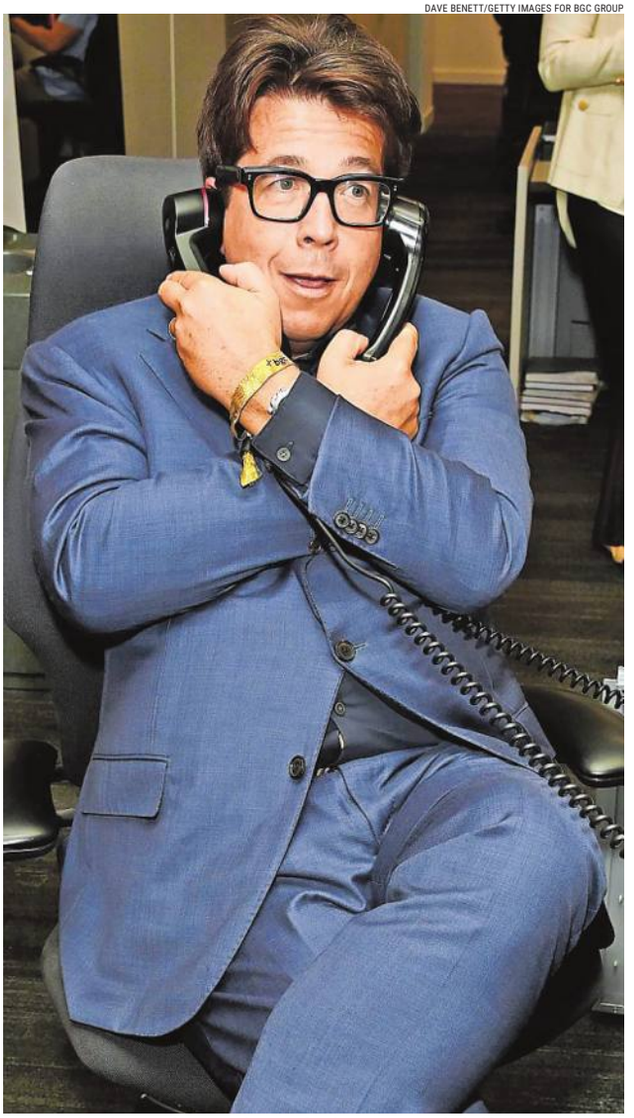
Soriot, 67, who has been chief executive since 2012, said at its half-year results in July that he did not "need M&A to deliver" the group's 2030 headline sales target of increasing annual revenues to $80 billion. The shares have been partly weakened by some late-stage trial setbacks, such as a phase-3 trial for Wainua, a potential blockbuster heart disease drug.

AstraZeneca is seeking to grow beyond its headline target and overcome the loss of patent protection to three cancer drugs in the early 2030s.

The company unveiled positive full results at the congress this week for tozorakimab, a treatment for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, supporting its internal forecast that the drug can generate more than $5 billion in peak year sales.

Soriot said the company believed it had a diverse pipeline that would "more than offset future losses of exclusivity and drive sustainable long-term revenue growth beyond 2030". But he added: "That does not mean we cannot create even more value for patients and for the company by adding BD deals."

DAVE BENETT/GETTY IMAGES FOR BGC GROUP



Working the phones The comedian Michael McIntyre, on behalf of Prostate Cancer Research, takes part in the BGC Group charity day in London on the 25th anniversary of 9/11. The annual event, which is held in memory of staff who died in the attacks, has raised more than $234 million for charities Pages 52-53

US rate rise more likely on price data

Jack Barnett

US inflation held steady over the past month but a closely watched measure of monthly prices exceeded expectations, increasing the chances of an interest rate rise by the Federal Reserve next week, according to investors.

Figures published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics yesterday showed inflation was unchanged at 3.4 per cent on an annual basis in August, in line with analysts' expectations. Over the month to August, prices increased by 0.4 per cent, also in line with forecasts.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile energy and food measures and is closely watched by the market, rose 0.3 per cent on a monthly basis in August, marginally above the expected 0.2 per cent increase. Annual core inflation fell from 2.5 per cent to 2.4 per cent.

After the release of the data, investors priced in an 85 per cent chance of the Federal Reserve raising borrowing costs to a range of 3.75 per cent to 4 per cent on Wednesday, compared with 70 per cent beforehand. The CPI report followed stronger-than-expected factory-gate inflation data released earlier this week.

A rate rise could sow tension between Kevin Warsh, chairman of the US central bank, and President Trump, who routinely urged Jerome Powell, Warsh's predecessor, to cut borrowing costs to as low as 1 per cent.

The war with Iran has been the main driver of US inflation this year. Oil prices this week topped $100 a barrel again, helping to push US diesel prices to a record $6 a gallon. The president has said he does not expect the war in the Middle East to conclude before the US mid-term elections in November.

Samuel Tombs, chief US economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said: "A [0.25 percentage-point] increase in the funds rate next week now looks likely."

Wall Street's main indices opened higher. The S&P 500, Dow Jones industrial average and the Nasdaq were up by 1 per cent in mid-afternoon trading.

Need to know

1 Sir Pascal Soriot, the chief executive of Britain's biggest drugmaker AstraZeneca, has indicated that it is not pursuing megadeals after a report last month that the FTSE 100 company was in talks with the American biopharmaceutical firm Bristol Myers Squibb over a $400 billion tie-up. Page 51

2 The UK economy grew much faster than expected in July helped by the World Cup, record hot weather and businesses stepping up their spending on artificial intelligence. The Office for National Statistics said gross domestic product rose by 0.4 per cent on a monthly basis. Page 51

3 US inflation was unchanged at 3.4 per cent on an annual basis in August but a closely watched measure of monthly prices exceeded expectations, increasing the chances of the Federal Reserve raising interest rates next week. Page 51

4 The past few years working at the Office for National Statistics must have been a nightmare. Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank of England, has accused it of leaving rate-setters flying blind due to data problems. The most concerning ramification is that it may steer policymakers into decisions that harm the economy. How to fix the jobs market, page 54

5 British banks last year sheltered profits of £4 billion from the taxman which the chancellor could target to raise revenues from the booming industry, according to a leading City analyst. Page 55

6 Housing market activity has deteriorated further with some buyers deferring deals until after the budget next month, the FTSE 250 housebuilder Berkeley has said. Page 56

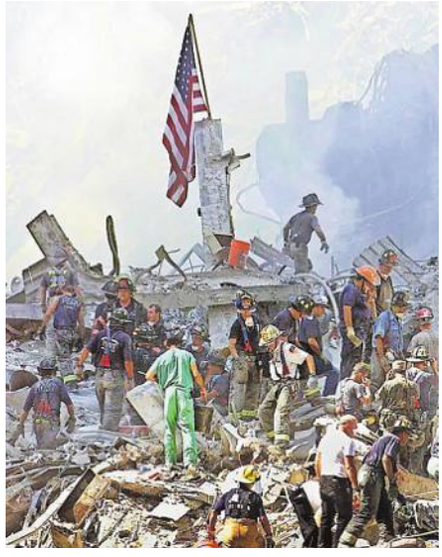
7 The British arm of one of the world's most aggressive activist hedge funds paid its staff an average of almost £1 million each last year. The highest-earning director at Elliott's UK business took home £5.1 million, excluding pension contributions, accounts filed at Companies House show. Page 58

"Steady growth at UK car plants has turned into rapid decline: last year they made 717,371 cars

Dominic O'Connell, page 55

For expert business analysis subscribe to the business newsletter thetimes.com/newsletters

Proud legacy of company devastated by 9/11 attack



Cantor Fitzgerald's offices were in the north tower of the World Trade Center, which was the first to be struck; right, the firm's boss Howard Lutnick on the tenth anniversary of 9/11 and, inset, speaking on television after the attack; he is now the US commerce secretary; left, rescue workers at Ground Zero

Ben Martin Financial Editor

It was a routine phone call that Sean Windeatt used to make every day. At about 1.30pm UK time, Windeatt, an accountant based in London for the brokerage Cantor Fitzgerald 25 years ago, would speak to his counterpart in New York to fill them in on what the firm's British arm had been doing while America slept.

Windeatt worked in Cantor's bread-and-butter US Treasury and interest rate swap businesses, which are in effect 24-hour markets.

"I'd say: 'This is what's gone on in the Treasury market here in the UK, this is what we've done,'" Windeatt recalled a quarter of a century later. "You're handing over, if you like, from an accounting perspective. Then the system would flip over to New York."

This time, however, there would be no smooth transition to Cantor's headquarters, which in 2001 spanned floors 101 to 105 of the north tower of the World Trade Center. About 15 minutes into Windeatt's call, at 8.46am New York time, the line cut off.

He looked across to the two televisions at the other end of the open-plan office where he was working and on the screens the worst terrorism attack in American history was unfolding.

It was a horror that would inflict a terrible toll on Cantor, which lost all 658 of its 960 New York-based employees who were in the office on September 11, as well as 50 contractors and visitors, when the hijacked American Airlines Flight 11 hit the north tower.

Seventeen minutes later United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the south tower, killing 61 employees of Eurobrokers, which later became part of the Cantor spin-off company BGC. Cantor suffered the biggest loss of life of any organisation caught up in the attacks that killed almost 3,000 people.

It was pushed to the brink of collapse by the disaster and Windeatt was soon in the thick of efforts to save the business in the weeks and months that followed, a rescue in which its London office played a central role because of the decimated state of its New York operations.

In those first few moments, however, Windeatt and his colleagues in London were watching the TV screens trying to work out "was that our tower or was it the other tower that had been hit?" When the "squawk box" intercom speakers on the equity desk in London also fell silent "you realise, of course, that it was our building," Windeatt said.

Howard Lutnick, 65, now the US commerce secretary, ran Cantor between 1996 and 2025. He had taken his son to his first day of kindergarten on the morning of September 11 and was not caught up in the attacks. His brother Gary, who was a bond trader at Cantor, died. He was 36.

So too did the person who hired Windeatt, who is now 53 and has risen up the ranks to become co-chief executive of BGC, the voice-broking business that was hived off in 2004 but is still controlled by Cantor, which is owned by the Lutnick family.

In his role at BGC, Windeatt, who is still based in London, is also involved in the company's philanthropic legacy from that terrible day. It started on the first anniversary of 9/11, when Cantor gave a day's revenues to the relief fund it had set up in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy to support the families of the employees it lost. This annual event soon widened to include other good causes and, following its separation, BGC has, since 2005, also held its own charity day in tandem with Cantor and gives away its global revenues from the day.

Celebrities attend the trading floors in London and New York to man the phones and close deals to help drum up as much money for charity as possible. Robert De Niro, Margot Robbie, the Prince of Wales and Prince Harry have all taken part.

This year Tom Hardy and Dame Helen Mirren attended yesterday's event at the BGC offices in Canary Wharf, along with Sir Gareth Southgate and the DJ Fatboy Slim. As of last year $234 million has been raised from the charity days since 2005, which has gone to more than 900 causes, including the Cantor relief fund.

The scale of the philanthropic effort has more than eclipsed the controversy that faced Cantor and Lutnick after 9/11, when it emerged that the firm had removed its missing staff from its September 15 payroll, cutting off the pay cheques to their families.

Windeatt, who a day after the attacks

State Oil audits under investigation

Helen Cahill

The City accounting watchdog has opened a series of investigations into the audit and financing of State Oil, the parent company behind the energy empire that collapsed in June 2025.

The Financial Reporting Council is investigating an individual accountant in respect of State Oil's financing arrangements, and is also looking into company audits conducted by KPMG and PKF Littlejohn.

The FRC said its investigation into an individual relates to arrangements in place between February 2021 and June 2025. Regulators are also scrutinising KPMG's audits for the financial years ending February 2022 and 2023, alongside PKF Littlejohn's audit for the year ending February 2024.

State Oil was the parent company of Prax Group, the oil and energy conglomerate that comprised petrol stations, upstream oil and gas assets and the Prax Lindsey oil refinery.

The Lincolnshire refinery — which once produced about a tenth of the UK's fuel and was one of only five such facilities left in the country — was placed into government-managed receivership when the company collapsed.

Husband and wife Sanjeev and Arani Soosaipillai built the Prax oil business over more than two decades by buying up assets to form the group, which employed about 1,300 people.

The founders established their business as State Oil in the early 2000s, and the company was initially audited by small, independent firms before signing up Grant Thornton in 2006. The group appointed KPMG as its auditor when revenues reached $2.3 billion in 2017.

The Times revealed in July last year that KPMG stopped signing off the accounts for Prax Group in the lead-up to its insolvency, having verified its finances for seven years. PKF Littlejohn, an audit firm popular with smaller companies, was appointed to replace the Big Four auditor.

The oil group was forced to restate its profits a number of times in the years after purchasing the Lindsey refinery. Prax restated its finances for several years. In one instance, it said it had made a loss after tax of $71.6 million in 2022, having previously reported a loss after tax of $41.7 million for that financial year. The restatement was related to a change in the accounting policies applied to the valuation of oil inventories.

A KPMG spokeswoman said: "We will co-operate fully with the FRC to conclude this matter as quickly as possible."

A spokeswoman for PKF Littlejohn said: "We take our professional responsibilities and the quality of our audits extremely seriously. We will co-operate fully with the FRC throughout its investigation. The opening of an investigation does not indicate that any findings have been made or that any misconduct has occurred.

"As the matter is now subject to a confidential ongoing regulatory process, it would not be appropriate for us to comment further at this stage."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51

UK beats growth forecasts

chancellor said yesterday: "Britain's economy is demonstrating a welcome resilience, despite serious global uncertainty.

"Our growth, although still fragile, was the fastest in the G7 in the first half of the year. But the conflict in the Middle East does have impacts here at home — from the cost of the weekly family shop to the cost of government borrowing."

A surge in UK government borrowing costs amid an intense global bond market sell-off has pushed the country's debt yields to a fresh 19-year high, prompting economists to warn that the fiscal headroom has dipped to just £5 billion from £23.7 billion previously.

Anxieties about lasting inflation stoked by the war in the Middle East have been the main driver of bond market turmoil.

Officials on the Bank of England's monetary policy committee are set to leave interest rates unchanged at 3.75 per cent next Thursday, but investors believe rates will rise twice by February next year.

DAVID HANDSCHUH/GETTY IMAGES

Not a day goes by that I don't think of those who died

David Buik

Hardly a day goes by when I don't feel sad, devastated and haunted by the loss of 658 colleagues at Cantor Fitzgerald and 61 from its sister company Eurobrokers. They perished in the rubble of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

It was the result of a barbaric attack by disciples of Osama Bin Laden, who flew an American Airlines plane — Flight 11 — into the north tower block between the 91st and 95th floor. Cantor Fitzgerald occupied floors 101 to 105.

Unsurprisingly, no one who went to work that day stood a chance of surviving. It was a miracle that our chief executive, Howard Lutnick, was taking his son for his first day at school. Sadly, luck was not on his brother Gary's side. He was one of the many consumed in that inferno of desolation.

In total, 2,753 people were massacred in New York that day as a result of a heinous act of treachery — about a quarter of them were Cantor employees.

Above all else, this was a human tragedy. We still grieve for the bereaved families. So many of those who worked in the New York office were known personally to the London office, where 200 brokers reciprocated in executing each other's orders in money markets, foreign exchange, derivatives and bonds, especially repos.

Of the Cantor employees who lost their lives, 63 were British. Close relationships between London and New York had been built up over many years. They were a close-knit family. At the time of the explosion, the loss of direct telephone contact between New York and London was devastating, unfathomable and inhumane.

What of Cantor's global business and the outlook? The management had the foresight to duplicate New York's technology and accountancy with London. So for some months London dealt with New York's clients until New York was re-staffed. Howard Lutnick in New York and Lee Amaitis and Shaun Lynn in London were instrumental in orchestrating and rekindling the recovery. It would not have been possible without the resolve, determination and commitment of the staff in the London office, which was pivotal for many months to come, until New York had time to regroup.

Markets dislike uncertainty and it prevailed. The day after the attack, the Dow closed for a full week, during which time it surrendered 14 per cent. It was thought that business interruption cost New York $11 billion, damaged property $9.6 billion and other liabilities $7.5 billion.

Since then, Cantor's global charity day has become folklore. A day's brokerage generated once a year, thanks to the generosity of their banking clients, initially for the benefit of bereaved families and then for other deserving causes, especially for children. It has raised hundreds of millions of dollars in the past 25 years.

To have witnessed the recovery of Cantor Fitzgerald and BGC Partners has been the greatest of privileges. I am so proud of the troops. A combination of initial anger, resentment, camaraderie and resolve saw their endeavours help to soften the blow of their unfathomable losses. They won through to fight another day.

David Buik is a veteran market commentator who worked for Cantor Fitzgerald and BGC from 1999 to 2011

was hand-picked by a top Cantor executive to help rebuild the business — defends the decision made by the company at the time, saying that "if you hadn't done it, there would be no company".

"Howard came in for a lot of critique," Windeatt conceded, but "we didn't have any money, all the money was at clearing houses. You'd make the same decision again in terms of having to do that."

Lutnick donated $1 million to establish Cantor's relief fund on September 14, 2001, and the firm pledged 25 per cent of its profits over the following five years, as well as providing healthcare cover for surviving family members for a decade, a package that totalled about $180 million for the relatives of the employees who died.

Windeatt says that charity "is incredibly important to us" and he believes successful firms such as BGC have a "responsibility" to support good causes.

In BGC's London offices, he is never far away from a reminder of 9/11. There are still about 70 people working in its Canary Wharf site who were with Cantor on the day of the attacks, including about 50 brokers. And while BGC has grown significantly since its spin-off and employs about 5,000 people around the world, everybody on the trading floor "understands the history of the company", Windeatt says. "And everybody around the floor is very happy to give up their full commissions for charity day."

Initially Cantor was in "survival mode" after the horrors of 9/11, but the rebuilding process quickly began. "Everybody pulled together," Windeatt said. "It really was pretty spectacular."

Former Costain boss is new British Steel chairman

James Hurley
Assistant Business Editor

Alan Lovell, the former boss of Costain, has been appointed chairman of British Steel following its nationalisation.

The government said Lovell would bring a "wealth of experience to British Steel at a crucial time for the business".

His appointment comes in the midst of a dispute between the government and Jingye, British Steel's former owner, over the decision to take it back into public ownership, a row that has caused tension between London and Beijing.

Lovell, a lay canon of Winchester Cathedral and the son of a farmer, was chief executive of six companies, including two in renewable energy and three in the construction sector, including Costain Group, the listed construction and engineering business.

He has been a non-executive director and chairman at several companies and organisations including Interserve, Lloyd's of London, SIG and the Consumer Council for Water. He is due to step down as chairman of the Environment Agency at the end of the year.

The government said Lovell "understands what it takes to lead companies through major change".

Ministers renationalised British Steel in July to protect "the future of steel production" in the UK. The Department for Business and Trade has said that the renationalisation was essential to maintain steel production for the UK's rail and construction industries.

Jingye, which bought British Steel for £70 million in 2020 after it had fallen into the hands of the Official Receiver, has been demanding compensation for investment losses and has accused the government of "trampling on international investment rules".

The business department and British Steel were approached for comment.

Grand Theft Auto maker bosses 'abused'

Greig Cameron Scottish Business Editor

Employees at the maker of *Grand Theft Auto* engaged in regular "denigratory profanity" towards management in an online forum, an employment tribunal has been told.

Rockstar Games has denied claims of unfair dismissal brought on behalf of 23 staff. More than 30 workers were sacked in October last year, with the company stating they had breached confidentiality clauses.

The Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain is supporting the staff and has claimed they were sacked because of their union activities.

Dayne Oram, a former senior production co-ordinator, was the first witness at the hearing in Glasgow.

Much of the day centred around a chatroom on Discord, an online platform, which had been set up for interaction between staff members.

Oram, a union member, had helped launch the chatroom and was a moderator of it. He maintained that it was used for legitimate union activity and there was widespread concern among staff they were being spied on.

Oram believes Rockstar began keeping tabs on people who had signed a petition against a full-time return to office working, which was handed to the company in the spring of 2023.

Thomas Cordrey, for Rockstar, said that several people who had left the company, including some who went on to be employed by rivals, had remained members of the Discord chatroom. There was even a video game journalist using it.

Cordrey asked how there could be a connection between the petition in 2023 and the dismissals in October 2025. Oram said the petition formed the "basis of a watchlist of people to keep an eye on for further activities". He added: "I believe it was the starting point and used to watch people for activities that were considered distasteful."

The inquiry was told that between 15 and 20 of those who signed the petition were union members but there was nothing on the list to identify them.

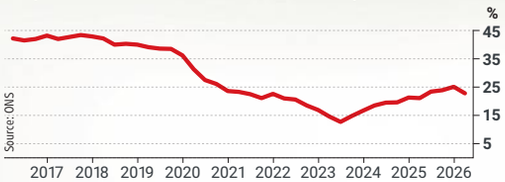
Cordrey argued the Discord chatroom went beyond its original purpose and became full of "denigratory profanity" towards management and executives. He cited several examples, including one employee calling management "cowardly corporate f***s". Cordrey suggested the chatroom had "got completely out of hand".

Grand Theft Auto is one of the most successful video game franchises of all time. Its sixth instalment is released in November.

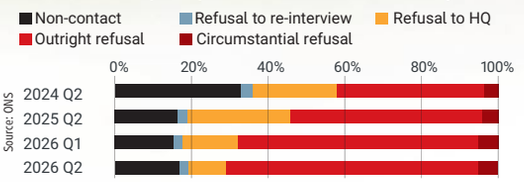
The tribunal continues next week.

Lucia Caminos, one of the GTA VI characters

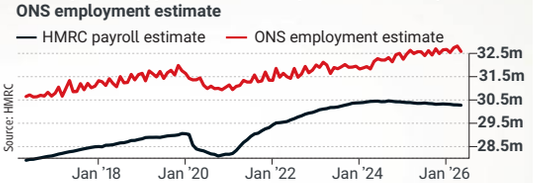
Response rate to the ONS's labour force survey



Reasons for non-participation in ONS labour force survey



Monthly HMRC payroll estimate compared with monthly ONS employment estimate



Delays and decades of unreliable numbers left country in the dark

THE TIMES
HOW TO FIX THE JOBS MARKET
PART 4

Jack Barnett looks at the data crisis at the Office for National Statistics and its troubling ramifications

The past few years working at the Office for National Statistics must have been a nightmare.

Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank of England, has accused the organisation of leaving rate-setters flying blind because of persistent data problems. Parliamentarians said that the ONS had a "daunting" task ahead of it to improve its data outputs.

The data crisis at the agency means it is "harder to believe we're capturing a representative sample of the population and it means statistics like the unemployment rate are inevitably estimated with less precision", Peter Levell, deputy research director at the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), an economic think tank, said.

In summary, there has been a litany of statistical mishaps that have eroded trust in the nation's bean counters.

Chief among them has been the car crash that is the statistics agency's labour market data. Responses to the underlying survey that underpins the publication slid to a record low of 12.7 per cent in the middle of 2023 and have only gradually recovered since, reaching a peak of 25.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, still well down on the 50 per cent of a decade ago. Responses also fell in the latest three months.

A new questionnaire, dubbed the "transformed labour force survey", has been beset by delays: it was originally supposed to come into effect in spring 2024 but may not appear until late 2027.

An index that measures price changes for materials used by businesses to manufacture goods was paused due to what the ONS called "quality-assurance" problems dating back nearly two decades. The monthly retail sales estimate was also postponed by two weeks so the agency could check the data.

Most recently, in June the ONS announced that it had accidentally deployed interviewers to the wrong survey, resulting in 1,200 telephone conversations not being included in its forthcoming labour market publication. It said that it had failed to identify the error, which would lead to "reduced-quality" July figures.

The UK's top economic think tanks have piled in on the ONS, too. Julia Diniz, an economist at the Resolution Foundation, said that her organisation had lost "confidence in the single-month data points".

She said: "We have been treating them with real caution, leaning more heavily on over-time trends rather than levels and also on other data sources. Everything needs to be cross-checked with other data sources and the timeliness of data has suffered as a result."

In a report last year criticising the ONS's decision to tweak the way it measured household wealth, the IFS said the methodology changes now meant that "official statistics do not provide a reliable picture of total household wealth or of the inequality in wealth between young and old". The ONS said the changes led it to conclude that it had overstated UK wealth by about £2 trillion between 2018 and 2020.

Organisational and financial problems have also abounded. An investigation into the ONS by Sir Robert Devereux, a retired permanent secretary at the Department for Transport, found that "deep-seated" cultural issues existed in the organisation.

A report released yesterday by a group of cross-party MPs on the public administration and constitutional affairs committee found that a "toxic culture" pervaded among senior officials at the ONS that contributed to the deterioration of data standards.

Sir Ian Diamond, who resigned as the ONS chief and UK national statistician in May 2025 due to health problems, told MPs in a hearing on his departure last year that a lack of funding from central government and a poor relationship with ministers were the main culprits for driving down data standards.

He told the public administration and constitutional affairs committee that "there were cuts everywhere" during his five-year tenure. More than a year after Diamond's departure, the ONS has only just announced this month that André Loranger, Canada's data chief, will replace him.

A decision to shift the headquarters of the agency from London to Newport during Tony Blair's premiership in the mid 2000s has often been criticised for diluting the appeal of working for the ONS, thereby making it tougher to recruit top-grade statisticians.

Andrew Wishart, an economist at Berenberg, an investment bank, said he had reservations about whether ONS staff "sense-check their work". This "likely stems from the loss of institutional knowledge when the agency moved to Wales in 2007, which led 90 per cent of its London-based staff to leave", he said.

A procession of government ministers have defended the move, most recently Josh Simons, who was in charge of the ONS in his role as a Cabinet Office secretary before he stepped down to allow Andy Burnham to run in the Makerfield by-election, paving his way to No 10. A Cabinet Office spokesperson told The Times that, at present, no secretary in the department had been delegated oversight of the statistics agency.

The most consequential problem of the ONS pumping out what is perceived as inaccurate data is that it may steer policymakers into decisions that end up being detrimental to the economy.

Bailey has repeatedly highlighted the issues that rate-setters have encountered when setting interest rates because of a lack of visibility over the true health of the labour market.

Although inflation has been above the central bank's target for about two years, and is forecast to potentially hit 4 per cent in the second half of this year from its present level of 2.9 per cent, weakness in the labour market and sluggish wage growth is expected to put downward pressure on price growth.

This judgment, however, is at least partly based on the ONS's jobs figures. If such figures are wrong, then there is a risk that the Bank of England could make a serious policy error.

That the central bank now places greater emphasis on its own data, such as that of its monthly decision-makers' panel, and other privately produced numbers, such as the purchasing managers' index and REC-KPMG report on jobs, in its quarterly monetary policy report shows how much faith has been lost in the ONS's data.

James Smith, a developed markets economist at ING, the Dutch bank, said: "The situation is less dire than it was — response rates for the headline labour market data have improved. But trust in the data is still relatively low.

"The Bank of England is getting around all of this by putting greater weight on surveys and administrative data like payroll numbers.

"It just means you can't put your faith in one number and instead decisions have to be based on a whole raft of data, none of which is perfect."

Rather than the ONS struggling to contact survey participants being the main reason for the fall in responses, the problem partly lies in the British public being unco-operative. In 2022, about 70 per cent of non-responders to the ONS's labour survey questions simply refused to respond.

America's statistics agency has flagged a similar disengagement problem. Response rates are higher in Europe, but that is because several countries in the bloc enforce participation, something the ONS has reportedly considered implementing.

Wishart said that slimming down the number of statistical releases that the ONS produced would be a good way to redirect resources to the agency's core outputs, such as the labour market, inflation and GDP numbers. The ONS plans to cut the number of releases it publishes by 10 per cent this year.

He said: "Refocusing on core economic statistics is a good idea. In a world of supply shocks from global energy prices to the minimum wage and payroll tax, the government and its creditors need to understand the state of the economy to set good policy and understand whether public debt is sustainable."

James Benford, director-general for surveys and economic and social statistics at the ONS, said: "We are acting on what we are hearing from users and are fully focused on the recovery of our surveys and economic statistics that is well under way — including increased responses to our social and business surveys, reaccreditation for our research and development statistics and supermarket checkout data used to calculate inflation.

"We know we have more to do, particularly as we prepare to transition to the transformed labour force survey next year. We will be publishing conclusions on new work integrating survey and administrative data sources for labour market and productivity this month, and I welcome feedback from users on this and wider progress on our improvement plan."

'Toxic culture' is blamed for crisis at ONS

MPs criticise delay in tackling data issues

Our news story yesterday on the problems that have beset the agency

Dominic O'Connell

The end of the road may be nigh for UK mass-market car manufacturing

A popular theme for car geek YouTube videos is the comparison of Land Rovers and Range Rovers to the squadron of Chinese lookalikes trying to take their place. Some of the usurpers have familiar names, like Chery and BYD, but others, like Lynk & Co and XPeng, are less well known.

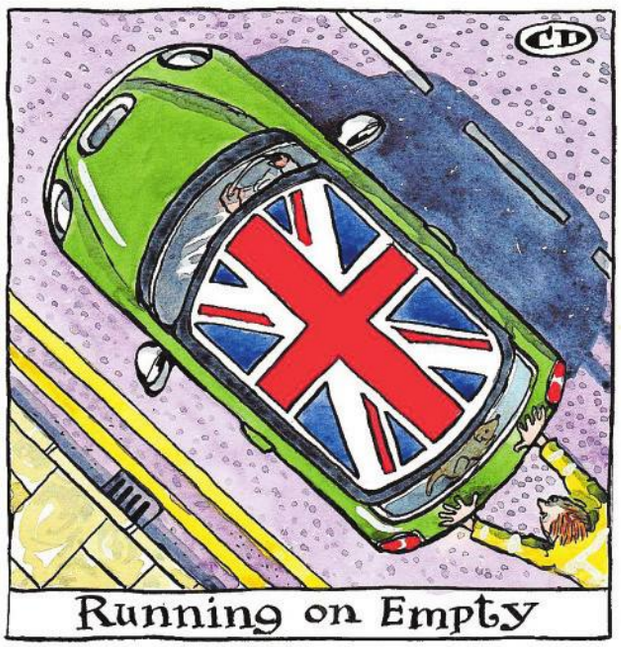
Results differ, but often favour the Chinese. One recent test by Carwow, the car retailer and lessor, compared the Land Rover Discovery to the Chery Tiggo and gave it to the Tiggo by one point, concluding: "We're screwed!" The Tiggo, by the way, costs tens of thousands of pounds less than the Discovery.

Despite the YouTube verdicts, it would be over the top to think the Chinese makes will quickly steal the market for upmarket off-road vehicles. The two Rovers still command a considerable cachet and are, frankly, desirable and fashionable in a way the Chinese cars are not.

But the latter's growing appeal is something to bear in mind in the week that Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), the Indian-owned, British-based company that makes the Rovers, said it would cut 4,000 jobs worldwide, most in the UK. It is not a mortal blow for the company, which employs about 34,000 people here, but it does raise questions about the future of British car manufacturing, and whether in fact there is one.

Just a decade ago that question could happily have been dismissed. British car plants were purring along nicely, making 1.7 million cars a year, most for export, and with credible expectations of soon beating the previous record of just under 2 million, set in 1972. The output then was dominated by homegrown brands like Austin, Morris and Rover (the modern JLR products were originally a spin-off from the mass-market car company) and foreign-owned marques such as Ford and Hillman.

The early 1970s turned out to be a zenith. The British automotive scene slowly dwindled in size and importance, laid low by endless strikes, poor management and an inability to keep up with lower-cost and increasingly higher-quality foreign competition. By 1982, production had fallen by more than half and it looked possible that mass-market carmaking could go the way of shipbuilding, textiles and coalmining.



But it didn't. Japanese carmakers looking to expand into Europe — first Nissan, then Honda and Toyota — decided the UK was the ideal place for them to set up. The government was welcoming, the right sites were available, a highly skilled workforce was in place and, crucially, UK-made cars had easy access to the European Union.

There were still closures. Ford stopped the Dagenham car lines in 2002, General Motors did the same at Luton the same year and Peugeot shut Ryton near Coventry in 2006. But those setbacks were balanced by expansion at other plants and gains at Mini, JLR, Rolls-Royce, Bentley and others.

That steady growth has turned into rapid decline. Last year UK plants turned out just 717,371 cars, and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders forecasts only a small increase this year. The collapse is on a similar scale to that seen in the 1970s. Some of the causes are the same, notably foreign competition. The top three cars in the British sales chart are made elsewhere: the Ford Puma (Romania), the Kia Sportage (Slovakia), and the Jaecoo 7 (China). The Jaecoo brand, by the way, is just three years old, an offshoot of the Chery group.

Other factors are new and, rather like the labour and management troubles of the 1970s, to a degree self-inflicted. First, energy costs are higher than elsewhere.

Alan Johnson, who runs Nissan's plants in the UK, Europe, India and Africa, told a Commons select committee last year that its Sunderland factory, the biggest in the UK, paid more for power than any other Nissan plant and that Britain was "not a competitive place to be building cars today".

Second, access to Europe is no longer pain-free. After Brexit, a free-market trade deal was agreed, but there are potential tariffs coming in January linked to the source of individual car components. There are also justified fears that the EU, whose carmakers have their own sea of troubles, may come up with ever-tighter restrictions. European leaders will be alive to the possibility of the UK being used as a back door to their market by the Chinese, a repeat of what Japan did 30 years ago.

Third, relations between the industry and the UK government have been soured by a mandate to end the sale of internal combustion engines and shift to electric power. The system is complicated, but in essence the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned from 2030. That, at least, is the current plan.

A public consultation on an "emergency review" closes on October 23. The outlook is not promising. The Nissan plant in Sunderland has the capacity to make 600,000 vehicles a year, but last year built just 273,000.

Toyota's Burnaston facility near Derby has a potential output of 285,000 a year and last year made about 92,000. And the "J" in JLR is for the moment redundant; Jaguar stopped production last December, pending a makeover and relaunch early next year.

On *The Business* podcast this week, David Bailey, professor of business economics at the University of Birmingham and a long-term student of UK carmaking, said he had "a real fear" for the future of mass-market plants. The government could help with action on energy costs, a revised electric vehicle mandate and fostering of investment by the Chinese. Even so, he feels the UK industry is close to an "existential" moment.

There are some bright spots amid the gloom. The supercar maker McLaren plans to take on 1,000 staff as part of its expansion plans, which should tempt Andy Burnham to a photo call at its base in Woking. Rolls-Royce is spending £300 million extending its plant at Goodwood.

This is likely to be the future of the British automotive industry: a concentration on luxury products with a premium price tag. But the three decades of reinvention and resilience that has kept mass-market manufacturing alive may be drawing to a close.

Dominic O'Connell is business presenter for Times Radio

Banks urged to surrender their £4bn tax shield

Ben Martin Financial Editor

British banks last year sheltered profits of about £4 billion from the taxman that the chancellor could target to raise revenues from the booming industry, according to a leading City analyst.

Lenders could avert a more damaging tax rise in next month's budget by offering a compromise to John Healey over their so-called deferred tax assets (DTAs), Jonathan Pierce of Jefferies has suggested. He said the industry should agree a deal with the chancellor. The "potential result" would be "extra tax receipts, happy backbenchers, happy banks, and impressed markets".

Pierce's proposal comes amid mounting speculation in the City that Healey is preparing to raise taxes on banks in his first budget on October 28.

Both the Trades Union Congress and Positive Money, a campaign group, have claimed the sector is enjoying "windfall" profits from higher-for-longer interest rates. Banks argue that they already shoulder a heavy burden because they pay a corporation tax surcharge on their profits and a levy on balance sheets. UK Finance, an industry lobby group, said this meant banks operating in Britain faced a total tax rate of 46.6 per cent last year, compared with 39.1 per cent in Frankfurt and 27.9 per cent in New York.

There is speculation that Healey might decide to lift the surcharge from its present level of 3 per cent to as much as 8 per cent. Pierce told clients in a note that banks could instead suggest a moratorium on DTAs, which are past losses offset against future profits that lower lenders' tax bills. He estimated that this allowed UK banks to shield about £4 billion of profits last year from tax, costing the Treasury about £1 billion.

Lloyds Banking Group alone protected about £1.5 billion of profit from tax last year.

Pierce said lenders could offer not to use the tax shield for a five-year period in return for a guarantee from the Treasury on the DTAs in the event of insolvency, enabling banks "to remove the current DTA deduction from regulatory capital". Banks could pay a 2 per cent fee for this guarantee, he added.

Such a scheme "may also avoid the need for a change in surcharge" or cap any increase in this tax to a 2 percentage point rise to 5 per cent, Pierce said.

The Treasury said: "Decisions on tax are a matter for the chancellor to set out at fiscal events, rather than routinely commenting on rumour."

We're The Business

From start ups to tech titans, market movers to City CEOs, our weekly podcast dissects the biggest stories in business with the entrepreneurs living through them.

SPONSORED BY pwc

The Business

Find The Business wherever you get your podcasts

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Business

Berkeley warns of pre-budget limbo

Alex Ralph Chief Business Correspondent

Housing market activity has deteriorated further with some buyers deferring deals until after the budget next month, the housebuilder Berkeley has said.

The FTSE 250 developer said in a trading update for the four months to August 31 that the Middle East conflict and political change and uncertainty in the UK had weakened buyer confidence and slowed the market.

Although Berkeley said it was receiving "good and stable levels of inquiries", it cautioned that the uncertainty and volatility in the market meant customers "without an immediate need to move and readily available liquidity" remained more cautious to commit.

In a profit warning in April, Berkeley forecast an aggregate pre-tax profit of £1.4 billion between 2027 and 2030, almost £600 million less than City analysts had predicted.

Before its annual shareholder meeting yesterday, Berkeley said it had continued to operate within this target but it expected things to be "broadly even over this period" and warned "some buyers may defer transactions until after the budget at the end of October and any election uncertainty dissipates".

It added: "At this stage, we anticipate pre-tax profits to be slightly weighted towards the first half of the current financial year, subject to the timing of completions."

Shares in Berkeley closed down 10p, or 0.3 per cent, at £32.84, leaving them about 10 per cent lower over the past 12 months.

Berkeley was set up by Jim Farrer and Tony Pidgley in Surrey in 1976.

The company operates mainly in London and the southeast and is one of the country's largest developers, building 4,076 homes in its last financial year.

In a blow to Labour's housebuilding targets, Berkeley said in April that it was struggling to make enough money from new projects and that it had stopped buying new land and would slow build-rates at its developments.

Berkeley said yesterday that the stamp duty land tax regime, introduced when interest rates were 0.25 per cent, required "urgent reform" to help meet the government's target of 300,000 new homes per year and to make homes more affordable.

"What was a manageable frictional cost when interest rates were at those unique and unsustainable levels has become a binding constraint now that interest rates have returned to more normal levels," Berkeley said.

"Far more tax revenue is being lost through depressed activity than is being gained through stamp duty land tax on new-build homes as set out by HMRC's own assessment."

Berkeley has proposed capping stamp duty at 1 per cent for first-time buyers and downsizers and removing the 5 per cent investor surcharge.

LUKAS BISCHOFF/GETTY IMAGES

Strong rail demand helped Trainline to offset the disruption from strikes and hot weather, but some train operators are using their own sales channels

Trainline hits buffers after ticket sales go flat

The UK's largest rail ticketing business said revenue was flat in the first six months of the year after battling strikes, hot weather and ongoing threats to its operation (Chris Dorrell writes).

Trainline reported ticket sales of £3.3 billion in the six months to August, unchanged year on year, while underlying revenue was 1 per cent lower at £233 million. The FTSE 250 company also announced a £100 million share buyback.

UK net ticket sales were flat at £2.1 billion, flat year on year as strong demand offset disruption from Tube strikes and heatwaves.

Trainline also flagged "ongoing headwinds" from operators such as LNER and Avanti "self-preferencing their own online retail channels" as well as the expansion of London's "tap-in, tap-out" network.

International ticket sales were down 4 per cent to £579 million after rail accidents this year hit sentiment in Spain.

The company is also under investigation by the Competition and Markets Authority over how prices are shown.

Trainline maintained its full-year guidance of £440 million to £455 million in revenue and £6.2 billion to £6.45 billion in ticket sales.

Its shares, which have dropped by more than a third over the past year, closed up 3½p, or 1.8 per cent, at 193½p.

Own the boring that makes exciting possible.

As owner-operators of the world's most critical businesses, our hands-on expertise helps us unlock unique opportunities and create long-term value.

Brookfield

Own what's next

Infrastructure Energy Private Equity Real Estate Credit

AMR ALFIKY/REUTERS

Dubai airport's British captain getting ready for take-off

Dubai International Airport sustained 16 direct hits in March and passenger numbers collapsed but it reported 6.3 million flyers in July. Chief executive Paul Griffiths, below, plans a "megahub" with a capacity of 260 million passengers a year

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

British Airways hasn't yet started flying back there. Lufthansa has only now recommitted. Air France has had a wobble. The American carriers meanwhile have no appetite for services into a region where their aircraft would be moving targets for ballistic missiles and drone attacks.

But even as it remains near to the epicentre of a war in all but name, Dubai International Airport is claiming that it is getting back to where its traffic was prior to the Israeli-American attacks on Iran and the Islamic Republic's regional retaliations.

It reckons it will be back up at par some time next year at which point it then accelerates plans not just to handle around 100 million passengers a year but to construct a new megahub so large that it will be an "aerotropolis" with capacity for 260 million. That is more than three times that of the current Heathrow and two-and-a-half times that of America's busiest airport, Atlanta. Dubai International is the world's largest international airport, a symbol of global east-west aviation traffic and the catalyst for the emirate's wealth and economic growth. It is also barely 100 miles from the Strait of Hormuz: a similar distance, say, from London to Birmingham.

Early in the conflict in March, Dubai's airport sustained 16 direct hits, the worst of which blew up a fuel tank, and air raid warnings went off several times a day. There were injuries during the attacks but no fatalities. The airport and the airspace was closed for periods of time.

Paul Griffiths, 68, is the Briton who is chief executive of Dubai Airports and has been for the past 19 years. He will be remembered by some as a lieutenant of Sir Richard Branson, both on Virgin's airline and its trains; others for his time as managing director of Gatwick Airport. Others again will also know him as something of a star organist, his spare time spent playing concerts at world-renowned venues.

He is currently on the road with the message that Dubai airport is very much open for business and that there have been no attacks or closures for nearly six months. Some passengers and airlines though prefer to make a judgement from news footage that shows a conflict still raging. In January the last full month before the attacks on Iran, Dubai International hit a record 8.7 million passengers.

In the initial weeks of the conflict passenger numbers collapsed. The airport however has reported a 26 per cent month-on-month increase in July to 6.3 million passengers.

"That's pretty remarkable if not spectacular when you think about all that has happened," says Griffiths. "We are now back to 84 per cent of where we were." He is confidently forecasting that passenger numbers will be back at 2025 levels "sometime in 2027".

Half of Dubai's passenger numbers is transfer traffic, travellers hopping off and then on to their final destination. Carriers took on different routes and different transfer hubs, but as Griffiths asserts: "The world cannot do without the Gulf hubs. They are too much a part of the global aviation network."

Unlike for the big European airports, boomtime for Dubai as a destination warms up from November as the worst of the desert heat subsides. Christmas and the new year are peak through to March before the Arabian mercury once more rises.

It was inevitable, he says, that European airlines would take out capacity from the Middle East and redeploy it to, say, Spain or other parts of the Mediterranean. "It's the obvious thing to do," he says. "If the route looks suspect, if consumer confidence is shaky, if you cannot get travel insurance because of what some governments are saying."

BA is to start flying there again at the end of next month and Lufthansa too.

The big US airlines United and Delta have yet to make commitments after pulling out last February. Air Canada has indicated it may recommence from January

"It sometimes seems that the further away you are, the more distorted the view," says Griffiths, adding that the airport would not be open if it were not absolutely certain about safety and security as a result of the United Arab Emirates' own "iron dome" defence systems to intercept Iranian missiles and drones.

The irony of a return to some form of normality at Dubai International is that it comes as the emirate begins to accelerate plans to consign it to history.

It has long planned that the Al Maktoum freight airport south of the city will convert to become Dubai World Central, a five-runway megahub with a new sprawling commercial district.

"The new airport will open in the early 2030s at a capacity of 150 million passengers a year," says Griffiths. "We will migrate traffic. Additional nodes will be added [to the new airport] to get capacity up to 260 million by 2040."It feels like a rival-crushing initiative against the competition in the Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, with pretensions to attract transfer traffic.

It may effectively leave only Istanbul as a major competitor on long-haul east-west routes. Istanbul's new airport has a capacity of 120 million passengers a year but expansion is planned to take that up to 200 million.

In the meantime Dubai International will move into retirement and be redeveloped as a prime real estate location, much like the regeneration of Hong Kong's old centrally-located Kai Tak airport.

The new Dubai hub will be a smart airport employing facial recognition technology and clever infrastructure design, he says. "You do not need vast terminals. Halve the process time and you double your capacity."

Yet this remains one of the world's most unstable hotspots. How can Dubai plan all this when, like everyone else, it has no idea whether the powderkeg will not just keep exploding?

"Dubai has been growing its economy for decades," says Griffiths. "But what is stability? Through the Gulf wars, 9/11, Sars, the global financial crisis, Covid, the airline industry has got used to volatility being normal. We have had to get used to it."

Burnham hails £1bn deal with French to make trains for north

GuyTaylor Retail Correspondent

The French industrial group Alstom has signed a £1 billion deal with the British government to supply 29 battery-electric trains for Transpennine Express, which runs railway services in the north of England and Scotland.

The new fleet of electric Adessia Stream trains, which will be assembled at the famous Litchurch Lane site in Derby, are the first of their kind to be used on a British main line route.

Ministers said the deal would support about 350 high-skilled jobs in Derby and a further 6,000 across the British supply chain, contributing an estimated £360 million to the wider economy. Passengers on routes between Manchester and Leeds are expected to see average journey times cut by ten minutes, while those travelling between Manchester and York can expect a 14-minute reduction.

Andy Burnham said the new trains, which will operate at speeds of up to 110mph, would "bring faster, more reliable journeys to the north and thousands of British jobs for the next generation." The prime minister added: "I've lost count of the number of times someone has stopped me to tell me about the train that never came. And when that happens, it means missed shifts, missed appointments and missed opportunities. Today that starts to change."

6,350

UK jobs supported by the deal

Source: UK government

The government, which is pressing ahead with the establishment of Great British Railways, the state-owned "guiding mind" for the industry, said work to build the trains would start from 2028 and the fleet would enter service from winter 2034.

It will operate on services between destinations including Liverpool Lime Street and Scarborough, Manchester Airport and Saltburn, and Manchester Piccadilly and Hull. The investment will also help deliver the Transpennine Route Upgrade's aim of increasing capacity by 30 per cent, the government said.

Chris Jackson, managing director of Transpennine Express, described it as "transformational" for rail travel in the north. He said customers could expect more seats and improved accessibility, including level boarding, adding: "Britain has a proud railway heritage, and this project puts the UK at the forefront of the next generation of cleaner rail technology."

For Alstom, one of the world's largest rolling stock manufacturers, the agreement combines a rolling stock contract worth about €930 million for the trains alongside maintenance contracts valued at €230 million.

Business

Hedge fund's UK staff paid £1m on average

Ben Martin Financial Editor

The British arm of one of the world's most aggressive activist hedge funds paid its staff an average of almost £1 million each last year.

The highest-earning director at Elliott's UK business took home £5.1 million, excluding pension contributions, in 2025, which was slightly lower than the £5.3 million handed to its top paid director a year earlier, accounts filed at Companies House show.

It paid £135.4 million overall in wages and salaries to its staff over the year. Given that it averaged 138 employees in the period, including 62 investment professionals, that equated to about £981,000 per person. It marks an increase on the £104.6 million it paid to an average of 133 staff in 2024, equating to £786,775 each.

The higher pay came as pre-tax profits at Elliott's UK unit, which also owns an Italian subsidiary, rose to £10.3 million, from £8.9 million a year earlier, on revenues that climbed by almost a quarter to £204.5 million.

Florida-based Elliott, which manages assets of about $80 billion and employs 676 people overall, has a long track record of building stakes in businesses and then agitating for changes in strategy, including calling for companies to put themselves up for sale, to boost shareholder value.

The firm was founded in 1977 by the lawyer Paul Singer, now 82. It has had an office in London since 1994 and is a feared force in the UK stock market.

High-profile campaigns by the hedge fund in Britain have included its successful campaign a decade ago to push the brewer AB InBev to lift its takeover offer for SABMiller, the London-listed owner of Peroni at the time, which was ultimately bought in a $100 billion-plus deal that was one of the biggest in UK corporate history. It also succeeded in agitating for Whitbread to sell its Costa coffee business eight years ago and more recently has amassed stakes in leading London-quoted companies including BP.

It sometimes turns to the courts to further its trades. The firm famously spent 15 years locked in a legal battle with Argentina over the nation's debt default in 2001, eventually securing a settlement with the country that yielded a $2.4 billion payout to Elliott. At one point during the dispute Elliott obtained an injunction from a Ghanaian court to seize an Argentine naval training vessel that had called into port in the west African country, in an effort to collect on the defaulted bonds.

There has been a notable turnover of staff at its British office in recent years. Mark Levine, who was one of Elliott's top fund managers in London, left in 2022 after 23 years with the firm and later set up his own family office investment house.

Franck Tuil, who was another long-serving investor for Elliott in London, also left the business in 2020 and founded Sparta Capital Management.

A spokesman declined to comment on accounts filed by Elliott Advisors.

Strait talks bring oil down while bank stocks go up

ALAMY

The prospect of higher interest rates pushed up NatWest 2.2 per cent to 697¾p

MARKET REPORT

London markets ended a difficult week on a relatively upbeat note as talks of a deal to manage tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz allowed the oil price to retreat from a four-month high (Simon Freeman writes).

Brent crude slipped 2 per cent, to close the trading week below $105, having pushed up to almost $110 across five days of escalating tit-for-tat military strikes in the Middle East.

Reports that foreign ministers were thrashing out a plan to restart shipping through the waterway eased the immediate pressure, but markets are still pricing in the risk of a protracted war.

The FTSE 100 snapped a five-day losing streak to climb 41.5 points, or 0.4 per cent, to 10,650.44.

NatWest was the standout, rallying 15½p, or 2.2 per cent, to 697¾p as the prospect of higher interest rates drove gains across banking stocks. **Lion Finance** gained 290p, or 2.2 per cent, to £136.70, joining **Barclays** and **Lloyds Banking Group** at the top of the index.

London Stock Exchange Group suffered the steepest fall, shedding 274p, or 3.2 per cent, to close at £82.38.

The FTSE 250 added 89.79 points, 0.4 per cent, at 23,975.73, clawing its way back from 2.5 per cent weekly drop.

Wall Street report

Indices rose yesterday morning as oil prices fell, offering some relief for stocks after a rough week. Equities have come under pressure amid uncertain rate expectations, the intensifying Middle East conflict and elevated Treasury yields. Strong results from Oracle on Thursday night helped lift shares of Dell and Hewlett Packard Enterprise. The tech-heavy Nasdaq composite was up 1.1 per cent at 26,372.68 in early-afternoon trading in New York, while the S&P 500 advanced 1 per cent to 7,669.78.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
NatWest Group	2.3%
Lion Finance Group	2.2%
Barclays	1.9%
Endeavour Mining	1.9%
Lloyds Banking Group	1.9%
BAE Systems	-1.3%
Next	-1.5%
Smith & Nephew	-1.7%
Sage Group	-2.2%
London Stock Exchange Group	-3.2%

‘Battersea Power Station is an amazing site. My brief is to unlock its potential’

James Saunders has strict instructions from his daughters on what the retail line-up needs, he tells **Tom Howard**

CHRISTOPHER L PROCTOR FOR THE TIMES

James Saunders at Dishoom on the Battersea Power Station estate; his first regeneration job was in the Wembley area

Walking into Dishoom, in the shadows of Battersea Power Station, I’m a little nervous. As a man who chooses korma or, at a push, a tikka masala at my local curry house, what will James Saunders make of my delicate palate?

We are having lunch here because it gives Saunders a chance to show off his new stomping ground. Since April, he has been chief executive of Battersea Power Station Development Company (BPSDC), which is overseeing the redevelopment of the power station and the surrounding 40-odd acres on behalf of its Malaysian owners.

Of all the restaurants that he has tried so far on the estate, Dishoom, he says, is his favourite. He already knows what he wants to order for us and I confess to him that I hope whatever it is isn’t too spicy.

“We’re having a low-spice lunch,” he tells the waitress, to my delight and embarrassment. Knowing it’ll all come in dribs and drabs, he gets straight into ordering: a chicken ruby, which sounds like a butter chicken, lamb chops, lamb biryani, okra fries, naan bread, raita and grilled greens. Two bottles of Kingfisher as well, because what’s a curry without a cold beer?

He assures me I haven’t ruined his plans for a fiery lunchtime curry. “That’s kind of my level, too, so I think you and I are in the same place,” he says.

Saunders must be as safe a pair of hands as anyone tasked with building a brand new neighbourhood around a famous venue could be. This is not his first rodeo. Before joining BPSDC, he spent 18 years at Quintain, which has turned the industrial wasteland around Wembley Stadium into thousands of flats, shops and bars.

“Wembley was all about managing a residential neighbourhood next to an entertainment district and I understand that mix,” he tells me. “What we’re trying to do here [at Battersea] is build a brilliant residential environment and also create a mixed-used destination.

“I’ve always thought [Battersea power station] was an amazing site. There’s so much potential; my brief is to unlock that.”

Although he has enjoyed a successful career in his own right, more people will probably know his dad, Ernest Saunders, the former Guinness boss who served time in prison in the 1990s for his role in the “Guinness Four” share-trading scandal. That probably explains why he won’t say much about his father.

Mercifully, he is more forthcoming on other subjects. An academic kid at Winchester College, where Rishi Sunak also went, he ended up studying law at Cambridge. “I went to Bar school to get my barrister’s qualification, but I had an instinct all the way through [university] that I’d zag away from it,” he says.

Inspired by his father, who had begun his career in advertising, Saunders became an ad man. “I’ve always been fascinated by brands and the advertising industry in the Eighties and early Nineties was really in its heyday.”

One of his clients was Coca-Cola, which brought him in-house as the brand manager for Coke in the UK.

The food starts to arrive, interrupting his story about the Diet Coke office-break adverts he worked on in the mid-Nineties that he admits “would struggle a bit today”.

The lamb biryani is a bit bland, as are the vegetables, but the lamb chops are better and, at £21 for two decent hunks of meat, seem reasonable value.

“You need to try the ruby curry, it’s my favourite bit,” Saunders says. He’s not wrong: sweet, creamy and with the gentlest of kicks. I can’t stop dipping my naan into the sauce.

One of his responsibilities at Coca-Cola was to manage the group’s sponsorship of the Euro 96 football tournament in England. This would turn out to be his route into property.

“I knew Wembley very well because of Euro 96. England had an amazing run and all the [England] matches were at Wembley, so I was there every few days. I saw this extraordinary site of cultural significance, but it was actually in quite a bad state.”

A decade or so later, having moved on from Coca-Cola and done some consulting work with Vodafone and been chief marketing officer at The Cloud, a wifi start-up, he got a call from a headhunter. They asked if he would be interested in joining this property developer that had bought up all the land around Wembley. “I went, ‘Not particularly. I don’t really work in bricks and mortar.’ They wanted a commercial person who understood how to work with utilities and with the FA.”

After speaking with Quintain’s “very persuasive” management, he relented and rose up the ranks to chief operating officer and then to the top job. It was while at Quintain that he got to know Battersea Power Station’s owners “because in regeneration, everybody knows each other”.

When Don O’Sullivan, the old BPSDC chief executive, was fired last year, Saunders was approached about replacing him. He had only formally left Quintain last Christmas and was not expecting such a quick return to corporate life.

O’Sullivan is now suing the company for unfair dismissal, claiming he was sacked after blowing the whistle on what he has called “serious financial misreporting”. Saunders has made his own checks.

“I’m perfectly happy all the accounts are in order,” he says. “There are a number of forensic reports that have been done and I’ve seen them. I can’t discuss much more because it’s going to a tribunal [scheduled for 2029].”

Saunders’s job is to finish what those before him started, but is he not bothered that he has missed the most exciting part of this whole project — the restoration of the power station?

“I have huge respect for the people who did the heavy lifting on the power station: that is civil engineering and curation of a treasured asset that is off the scale.

“But there is still half [of the estate] to be done and that’s a great opportunity. The power station is not even five years old; it’s a baby with a very elegant 1930s exterior. That’s why I think this is an exciting journey — there’s still so much more to do.”

About 2,200 flats, priced from £400,000 or so up to £30 million, have been built in and around the power station, along with 800,000 sq ft of office space, most of which is occupied by Apple, and 170-plus shops, bars and restaurants. On the remaining 16 acres, BPSDC has planning consent for another 2,000 flats and 1 million sq ft of commercial space. Saunders reckons there’s another decade’s worth of work, if not more.

He also wants to tweak the line-up of retailers. “We’re under-represented in some categories,” he says. “I have four daughters between the ages of 15 and 22 and they’ve been clear with me that we need more teenage fashion and beauty [retailers].”

There will be changes to Battersea’s marketing strategy too. “I think we’ve been a little bit better at marketing the outside of the power station than the inside. I want to put more emphasis on what’s on the inside, because that’s what will make you come back a second or a third time.”

The Malaysian owners have sunk an estimated £5 billion into the wider Battersea Power Station regeneration. Saunders is adamant that they are able and willing to write more cheques.

“The shareholders are very committed to seeing this through. They are fantastic long-term partners and that was a key criteria for me, particularly at a time when other projects and new-build sites in London are stalling. Despite the cost of construction, building regulation and all those kinds of things, we’re moving ahead. Regeneration is best done at speed in my experience. Momentum is really important.”

CV

Age: 60
Education: Winchester College; University of Cambridge (BA Hons, Law); Inns of Court School of Law; London Business School (Sloan Masters)
Career: 1991-93: account director, Lowe Howard Spink; 1994-2000: brand director, the Coca-Cola Company; 2002-04: managing director, World Sports Management; 2005-07: chief marketing officer, The Cloud Networks; 2008-25: chief executive, chief operating officer and commercial director, Quintain; 2026-present: chief executive, Battersea Power Station Development Company
Family: Married with five children

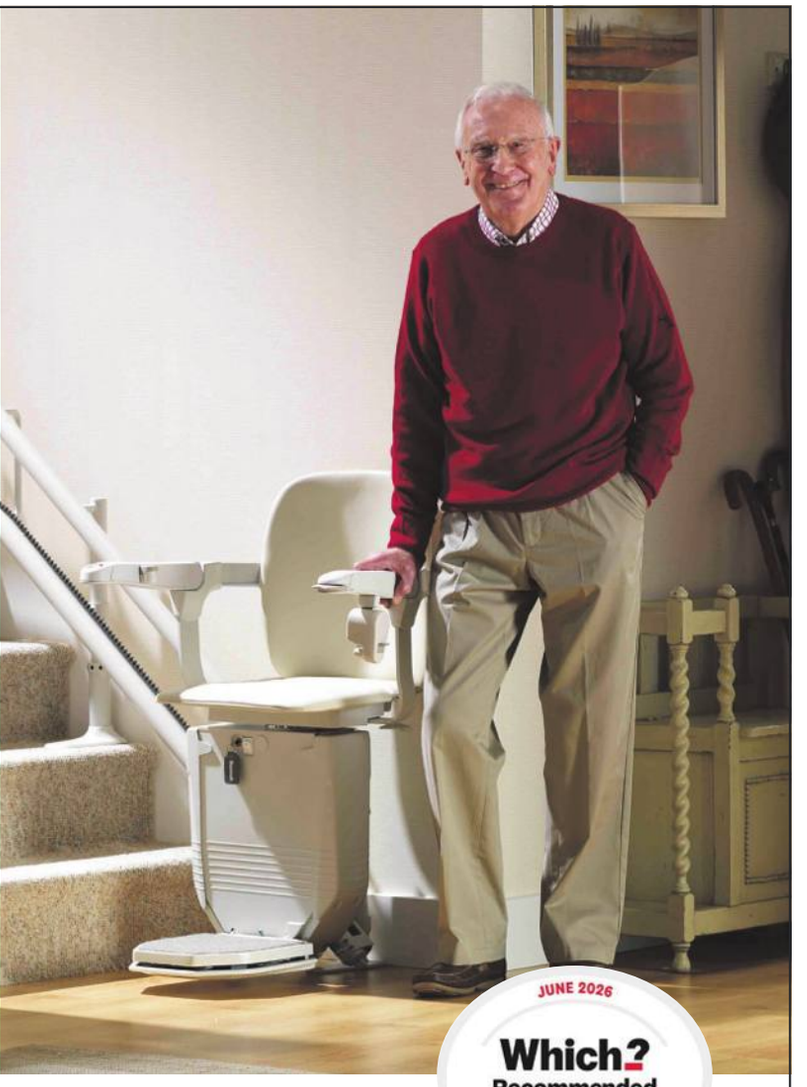
RECEIPT

1 x Nimbu soda	£5.60
1 x still water	£5.40
2 x Kingfisher	£13.00
1 x chicken ruby	£18.90
1 x raita	£5.50
1 x lamb biryani	£21.00
2 x plain naan	£10.40
1 x charred lamb chops	£19.90
1 x okra fries	£7.70
1 x grilled greens	£7.50
Service charge	£14.36
TOTAL	**£129.26**

Dishoom Battersea, SW11

THANK YOU!!

“I only wish I’d bought my Stannah stairlift sooner”



JUNE 2026
Which? Recommended Provider
STAIRLIFTS

With a stairlift from Stannah you can travel smoothly from one floor to another and continue to do all the things you want to do.

Getting a stairlift means gaining even more freedom and ease in your home. At Stannah, we’re committed to helping you live life to the fullest in the place you love. A stairlift is a symbol of enhanced independence, comfort, and happiness, empowering you to enjoy every moment.

Customers often tell us they wish they had their Stannah stairlift installed sooner when they realise what a big difference it has made to their life. Give us a call to find out how our stairlifts can make life easier for you too.

Why choose Stannah?

- ✓ Wide range of stairlifts for all staircase types
- ✓ Buy or rent a stairlift to suit your needs and budget
- ✓ 2-year warranty on new models
- ✓ 24/7 support from local engineers and our UK call centre
- ✓ Over 30 fabric options—more choice than any other provider
- ✓ Trusted British family business with over 150 years of lift expertise

Contact us today

Scan to find out more

0800 0778 946

stannah.com

MADE IN BRITAIN

Stannah

Enjoy the life upstairs

Money

I babyproofed my career, before I was even pregnant
Page 63

Footloose and fancy free — but can't afford to date
Page 65

My bold ideas to get the nation investing
Lord Lee of Trafford, Page 66

Failing to invest savings simply leaves your money at the mercy of inflation, warns **Aaliyah Ahmed**

The £35k wealth mistake your family is probably making

The cost of the UK's failure to fully embrace stock market investing is today laid bare. The Times Smarter with Money campaign, launched this year, is calling for a financial education revolution to help to make the nation better off. We also want to see one million more savers turn into investors and start reaping the rewards.

In the run-up to the budget next month, Times Money found that:

- The UK is now the worst in the G7 when it comes to investing wealth
- An exclusive poll suggests that one in two savers are afraid to invest
- Households have missed out on as much as £1 trillion (about £35,000 each) by snubbing the stock market

It comes after the campaign was endorsed by Akshata Murty, who launched the numeracy charity Richmond Project last year with her husband, the former prime minister Rishi Sunak.

We are also calling for a crackdown on financial disinformation online as well as action to spur parents to invest on behalf of their children.

The government and the investment industry this year launched an Invest for the Future campaign, and the need for such a push is becoming increasingly clear. The UK has accumulated vast household wealth but much of it is concentrated in property and cash rather than shares and other productive assets.

With ministers under pressure to boost economic growth and unlock more investment, the vast sums sitting in cash have come under renewed scrutiny. So why have we become a nation of savers and what would it take to change that?

Smarter Money

COUNTRY COMPARISON: The share of households' investible assets held outside pensions in 2025

FALL FROM GRACE

The UK was one of the first countries to try to create a nation of retail investors. The "Tell Sid" campaign in the 1980s encouraged ordinary households to buy shares in the privatisation of British Gas.

Yet, four decades later, the nation has been overtaken by countries that began building retail investment cultures much later.

Research by Aberdeen Investments in 2025 found that 8 per cent of households' investible assets outside pensions in 2025 were held in equities and funds.

That compares with 33 per cent in the US, 22 per cent in Canada, 19 per cent in Italy and 13 per cent in France.

Japan, which only began encouraging retail investment in the early 2010s, has now reached 9 per cent.

Singapore is further ahead at 11 per cent, while South Korea is now level with Britain.

Rachael Griffin from the wealth manager Quilter said this should be a "wake-up call". She said: "For decades we have built a culture that encourages people to save, but not to invest."

The contrast is notable because Asian countries have not simply relied on a single campaign. Japan expanded its tax-free Nisa investment scheme, while reforms in South Korea improved shareholder

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62

Money

What failing to invest your savings could cost you

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 61

returns, and India mixed education with campaigns encouraging investors to diversify beyond property and gold.

Peter Branner from Aberdeen Investments said successful investment cultures were built "gradually through a series of reforms that make investing more accessible, attractive and rewarding".

A LOVE OF PROPERTY — AND CASH

Half of household wealth is held in property, according to Aberdeen. Some 15 per cent is in cash, and 8 per cent is in equities and mutual funds.

The love of property is not uniquely British. South Korean households have 65 per cent of their wealth in housing, compared with 52 per cent in China and 51 per cent in India.

But we have also become heavily reliant on cash savings. A YouGov survey of 3,000 people for Times Money found that 45 per cent of adults who have enough assets to be able to invest held their total wealth in savings, while a further 22 per cent held most of it in savings. Only 24 per cent invested most of their wealth.

The cash pile is enormous. Analysis of Bank of England data by the investment platform Lightyear found that about £1.2 trillion was sitting in bank accounts, earning an average interest rate of just 1.2 per cent.

That does not mean cash is a bad investment for everyone. It provides an essential buffer for emergencies and is appropriate for money that will be needed soon. But while cash might feel safe, leaving long-term savings in low-paying accounts lets inflation eat away at their buying power.

SCARED SAVERS

The biggest obstacle may not be a lack of money or even a lack of information. It is fear.

The YouGov survey found that fear of losing money prevented 49 per cent of adults questioned from investing or investing more. Some 47 per cent said a lack of disposable income was a factor, 40 per cent cited cost of living pressures and 35 per cent a lack of knowledge.

Among people who do not invest 29 per cent said they were interested but did not know where to start.

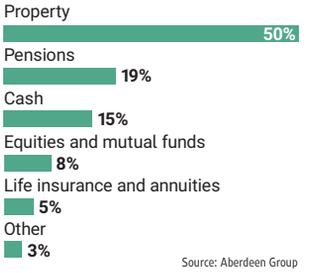
Separate research commissioned by the investment firm Invesco found an even higher proportion citing fear of loss, at 53 per cent, compared with 40 per cent who cited a lack of knowledge and 23 per cent who said they did not have enough money.

Surprisingly, higher earners were the most fearful group. Half of those with at least £100,000 in cash savings said they feared they would lose out if they invested.

Sonia Bainbridge from Invesco said that the industry had made investing cheaper and easier but had failed to address the psychological barriers stopping people taking the plunge.

Where our money is held

Share of household wealth



Source: Aberdeen Group

Getting people investing requires them to understand risk, inflation and long-term returns well enough to feel comfortable making a decision — but knowledge of these concepts is low.

Of those who did invest 68 per cent told Invesco that they had not had much money or known much about investing when they started.

Lizzie Gaisman from the Richmond Project said 40 per cent of adults had poor or very poor financial literacy. More than 80 per cent of those who struggled to understand money also performed poorly in maths, she said.

"Many people's confidence in grasping the Big Three concepts that are fundamentals of financial literacy — interest, inflation and understanding risk — is worryingly low," she said.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

The consequences are not only theoretical. We have missed out on more than £1 trillion of potential wealth creation over roughly 60 years, equivalent to more than £35,000 per household, according to PwC, a consultancy, and TheCityUK, a financial industry lobby group.

The calculation is an estimate of what households could have accumulated had a greater share of their wealth been invested rather than concentrated in lower-growth assets. It should not be interpreted as a guaranteed return that every household could have achieved.

The investment firm Murphy Wealth calculated that if the £1.2 trillion sitting in bank accounts earning 1.2 per cent remained there for ten years, it would grow to about £1.4 trillion, assuming that the rate stayed unchanged.

If instead the money achieved a 6 per cent annual investment return, it would grow to just over £2 trillion. At the 12.4 per cent average annual return delivered by the MSCI World index over the past decade, it could reach more than £3.4 trillion.

Those returns are not forecasts or guarantees — markets can fall as well as rise — but the calculations illustrate the enormous difference between long-term investment growth and leaving money in low-interest accounts.

PwC argues that the issue is also one of national economic competitiveness. Low household investment means less domestic capital flowing into companies, infrastructure and innovation, leaving Britain more reliant on overseas investors.

£1.2trn

The cash sitting in UK bank accounts, earning an average interest rate of 1.2 per cent

The stakes are also becoming higher. PwC estimated that between £5.5 trillion and £7 trillion could be transferred between generations, creating a huge opportunity to put more household wealth to work.

HOW TO CREATE A NATION OF INVESTORS

The government has recognised the problem and plans to steer more long-term savings towards investment by reducing the annual cash Isa allowance for under-65s to £12,000 from April 2027, while keeping the overall Isa allowance at £20,000.

But one lesson from Asia is that there is no single policy fix. Japan's expanded Nisa scheme, India's financial education campaigns and South Korea's efforts to improve shareholder rights and reduce transaction costs all formed part of broader reforms.

The UK will need something similar. Griffin said that making financial education compulsory in primary schools from 2028 was "a significant and welcome step", but she warned that it would take years before its impact could be judged.

"For those who are already out of education, targeted support and new forms of advice should help those holding too much in cash make the leap into investing," she said.

The challenge for the government is to encourage more investment without tempting savers to take inappropriate risks.

For Professional Clients Only | Marketing Communication | Capital at Risk

ETFs and Indexing

Opportunity is everywhere.

Access is everything.

For ETFs and Indexing, access is world-leading indices, sharpened by market intelligence.

Through consideration and intent, we focus on creating products that deliver growth opportunities in complex, fast-changing investment environments, meeting the short-term and long-term priorities of our clients.

assetmanagement.hsbc.com

HSBC Asset Management

Approved for issue in the UK by HSBC Global Asset Management (UK) Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Copyright © HSBC Global Asset Management (UK) Limited 2026. All rights reserved. Content ID: D048594; Date of Approval: 28.05.2026

‘How I baby-proofed my career — years before having children’

Worried that her job wouldn’t suit family life, Gabriela Flax made a birth plan that involved starting a business, reports **Alice Wright**

In her late twenties Gabriela Flax knew she wanted children but was unwilling to forfeit her career or take the big financial hit that many mothers face.

Women’s earnings fall an average of 42 per cent five years after having their first child, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Flax, 31, from London, believed there must be another way, and so spent four years moving towards more income with more flexibility — ditching her 60-hour weeks working as a product manager at tech companies such as Techtronic Industries and AlphaSights.

“I knew I wanted children but there has always been this niggle in the back of my mind going, ‘all of this works really well when it’s me, dog, plus husband, but how is having a child going to change the way in which I work, how do I prepare for that?’” she said.

She named these planning years — the time women have when they know they might want children but are not yet at the point of trying to get pregnant — “Trimester Zero”. The phrase has resonated with young women online where Flax has built up nearly 70,000 followers across Instagram and TikTok.

Gabriela Flax planned her career change before pregnancy’s “energetic deficit”

> “The planning years, when women know they might want children but aren’t yet trying, are what I call ‘Trimester Zero’”
>
> **Gabriela Flax, career strategist**

LESS WORK, MORE MONEY?

She now runs an advice business, Pivot School, which helps women to diversify their income streams and make their work lives more flexible in preparation for parenthood.

She said she earns three times as much as she did working in tech and is still paying into her pension and Isas. Having changed careers three times and moved from a traditional nine to five into being self-employed, Flax knows that such life changes take time. “You don’t just decide to pivot your career one day and it happens. If you are thinking about going self-employed because you want a family, you need to start that work gradually, in an ideal world, two years before you’re thinking about becoming a parent,” she said.

Flax says Trimester Zero is when women have full negotiating power at work, without the stigma that can come with becoming a working mother. Many fear they may be overlooked for promotion because of their family commitments, or because they may take a career break again to have another child. She also advises using those years as a runway while you have more energy.

She is now in the second trimester of her first pregnancy. “Everyone’s is going to be different, but my first trimester was brutal. If I had made the decision to start reorientating my career when I saw those first two lines on the pregnancy test come up it wouldn’t have been possible.

“I was in an energetic deficit for months. I was useless, I barely got out of bed,” she said.

Flax’s baby-proofed career includes several incomes, including some that do not require her to be present at all. As well as one-on-one career advice, Pivot School also sells written guides and digital resources for those looking to change career.

She says a key part of her plan has been hiring a team so the business can continue to thrive when she is on maternity leave.

Flax also does consultancy work for tech startups, using her background in product development to work on a project-by-project basis.

Flax believes it is important to get to grips with this way of working because the economy is moving towards what she calls the “Hollywood model” — where highly skilled, specialised workers come together for a short time to work on a project — much like actors, producers, directors and artists coming together to produce a film — rather than working a nine to five for one company for 40 years.

“Let me tell you, with that model your day rate is going to be a lot better than whatever your full-time employer is paying you,” she said.

She also makes money through brand partnerships on social media and from subscribers to her newsletter on the platform Substack.

“Sponsorship with companies that are trying to access the kind of audience that I have is a really lucrative part of my career now. That can be anything from brands that do IVF funding to companies that provide tools that people can use to build portfolio careers,” Flax said.

“I share some guides free of charge on my Substack, which helps build an audience that I can sell other resources to, allowing me to make money without actually having to be online.”

Flax said one of the biggest things holding women back in preparing their careers for motherhood is that they have prioritised being what she calls “an internal rock star” instead of promoting their achievements online.

“The question I love asking these high-achieving women who have had back-to-back promotions and pay rises is, does anyone outside of your company know? Could anyone google you and learn that about you? And often they have zero reputational equity outside the four walls of their office building.

“A big part of Trimester Zero is if you’re good at something, you need to start telling people so your brand, your incredible skillset is out there and people can start recommending you. From there opportunities start coming.”

Flax said that a solid understanding of how family finances work can help women adapt their career to motherhood.

“If they could get a dose of confidence in their financial literacy and have a plan for what their finances will look like if they choose not to come back to their nine to five after maternity leave it would be a massive help in navigating that jump.”

70,000

The followers Flax has across TikTok and Instagram

What do you wish you had been taught about money in school?

Aaliyah Ahmed

Parents are expected to be their children’s biggest source of financial education, yet one in four said that they did not feel confident teaching them about money.

Some 69 per cent told a survey by Saffron Building Society that they thought parents had the biggest influence on a child’s attitude towards money, compared with 6 per cent who said schools played a bigger role. Social media and children’s peers were also considered more influential than schools.

But 26 per cent of parents with children aged 16 or under said they lacked confidence when it came to teaching their children essential money skills.

‘I’VE HAD NO EDUCATION MYSELF. THAT’S A SCARY THING’

The Times’s Smarter with Money campaign is calling for proper financial education in schools and the workplace. Sophie Caley from Saffron Walden in Essex has a two-year-old daughter and said she does not feel qualified to teach her about money.

Sophie Caley with her daughter

“I’ve had no financial education myself, it’s just been very much self-taught, and that’s a scary thing,” she said. Caley, a freelance digital designer, said she remembers being taught about money once at school — a half-hour session with an entrepreneur who explained the difference between being a sole trader and a limited company, as well as the importance of putting money aside for tax. I would have been under 15. And to have only half an hour of that — it’s shocking,” she said.

Smarter with Money

She believes parents should take responsibility for teaching their children but said schools could give families a crucial helping hand.

“Children should be taught about finances as early as possible,” she said, suggesting that lessons could begin from nursery or reception.

Caley, 38, has already started introducing the idea of saving to her daughter through play. Her toddler has a piggy bank and listens in keenly on family conversations about the cost of goods and prices. But she worries about having to explain financial concepts that she is still learning about herself, particularly as the financial system changes.

Craig Fish from the broker Lodestone Mortgages said the figures showed that children’s money education was being caught between the responsibilities of parents and schools.

“It’s embarrassing, not just for schools but for the system as a whole,” he said. “Children fall through a gap nobody owns.”

Fish said financial education should begin in primary schools, covering budgeting, saving, debt and the difference between needs and wants for seven-year-olds, before moving on to tax, credit and investing.

Tony Redondo, the founder of the foreign exchange service Cosmos Currency Exchange, said: “The burden falls on parents who were never taught this stuff themselves.

“Expecting hard-pressed parents to build resilience in their children without proper tools or a solid school baseline just recycles anxiety and low capability down the generations.”

START SAVING EARLY

Saffron’s survey suggested that 68 per cent of adults believed children should start saving by the age of ten.

Some 65 per cent regularly saved for children in their family, yet 65 per cent of those who saved wished they or their family had started earlier, while 52 per cent said rising costs prevented them from saving more.

Nathan Huxham from Saffronsaid: “Financial education shouldn’t be something children have to pick up by chance, or something parents feel they have to teach alone.

“Schools have an important role to play in giving children a strong foundation, while parents can reinforce those lessons through everyday conversations and decisions at home.”

Money

The abusers who control your bank account. And your heating

As the charity Refuge reports a rise in tech-related abuse, **Megan Harwood-Baynes** hears from victims

When Lucy met her partner she thought he was the perfect man that "anyone could fall in love with". Months into their relationship, his behaviour changed. He began to threaten her, abandon her in public places and scream in her face. He then told her to borrow £14,500, taking her phone and putting in the details needed for the application.

In a phone call to Nationwide Building Society's specialist support team, Lucy, who is in her thirties, said: "I felt emotionally manipulated to take the loan out. I was terrified, and then I was horrified at how easily I could get that much into my account."

Their relationship escalated into physical violence and he was arrested and a trial date set. But Lucy, whose name has been changed, still had to make monthly payments on the loan.

Her story isn't unusual. One in six women in the UK have experienced some form of financial pressure from a partner, according to Surviving Economic Abuse, a charity. This is up from one in seven last year.

Economic abuse is a form of domestic abuse where one person controls, exploits or restricts another's access to money, work, housing and other basic needs. Nationwide's specialist support team in Northampton, which Times Money spent the day with, gets about 25 calls a month from victims. The team also works with customers with vulnerabilities, including those with mental health difficulties and other disabilities, and Nationwide offers 475 physical safe spaces in its branches, with private phones and numbers that you can call to get specialist help.

78%
The yearly increase in the number of tech-related financial abuse incidents reported to Refuge

HOW TO GET HELP

Nicky is part of the Nationwide team. On the first call she had from Lucy, she spent an hour listening to her story. Two weeks later, she was able to call her back.

"I'm so glad I could be the one to give you this news personally," she told Lucy before confirming that the loan had been written off and would be removed from her credit file within ten weeks.

Lucy cried. "I'll be honest with you, I've been more worried about this than the trial," she said.

Then a mother of three calls the Nationwide team for help. Her partner is on bail, with conditions preventing him from approaching the family, but has continued to exercise control. He has used their smart home thermostat to raise the temperature in the family home, and placed physical tracking devices in the car. He then took over paying the direct debits for the broadband so that he could ensure the wifi stayed on to power those devices.

The day before the family's household bills were due to be paid, he transferred £11,000 out of their joint savings, leaving the woman with pennies. "I'm pretty scared," she said on the phone. "Obviously all these things have been reported to the police. We found so many things. It's a horrible situation."

The call handler is patient, listening as the woman tells her everything. He removes her name from the joint accounts, bypassing the need for a second account holder's signature because specialist teams have the power to override banking rules.

He also cancels the woman's overdraft so that her abuser cannot run up any debt in her name, and encourages her to try to recover the money through a divorce solicitor. He also refers her to the women's charity Refuge, which reported a 78 per cent rise in referrals for cases involving technology-facilitated abuse over the year to March. In a report to parliament, Refuge said that smart tech including CCTV cameras, TVs, thermostats and fitness trackers had been used to "remotely frighten and control" those being abused.

The Nationwide team also heard from a visually impaired customer who was living in a refuge. They had to communicate through a translator.

Her ex-husband took control of the family's finances and intercepted her universal credit and personal independence payments. He transferred the money to his own account and also built up significant debt in the victim's name, including a personal loan of £5,000.

With a monthly income of just a few hundred pounds from the benefits still being paid into her account, she had no way of repaying the debt.

Nationwide agreed a three-month zero-payment plan on the loan, froze all interest and cancelled any direct debits, as well as pausing all collection letters.

It also began a formal internal fraud investigation. The team does not guarantee to write loans off — each case is considered independently.

WHAT BANKS ARE DOING

If you are tricked into transferring £10,000 in a scam, you are protected by the bank's fraud reimbursement framework. But if you are in an abusive relationship and have £10,000 stolen from your joint account, there is no blanket protection — some banks are better than others.

Many, including Nationwide, allow customers to block payment references, which you can add when sending someone money, for example, "Cash for shopping". Abusers who are blocked from all other forms of contact have used these references to send messages harassing or threatening their victims. More than 20,000 customers adopted the reference blocking feature in the first few weeks after it went live.

On Wednesday the Association of British Insurers published two new guides to help the insurance and pension industry support those experiencing abuse.

Abusers have used smart TVs and fitness trackers to threaten their victims

POLAR CAPITAL
Polar Capital Technology Trust plc

Navigating disruption.
Capturing innovation.
Targeting transformation.
Focused on the future.

Discover the Trust built on decades of technology expertise.

polarcapitaltechnologytrust.co.uk

Capital at Risk.
This is a marketing communication. Investors may not get back the original amount invested. This advertisement should not be construed as advice for investment. Important Information: This announcement constitutes a financial promotion pursuant to section 21 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and has been prepared and issued by Polar Capital LLP. Polar Capital is a limited liability partnership with registered number OC314700, authorised and regulated by the UK Financial Conduct Authority ("FCA").

‘Young, free and single, but can’t afford to date’

Cash-strapped young Gen Zers fear that they are losing out on romance, writes **Hodan Sultan**

If you are going to get on the property ladder in southeast England, the chances are you are going to need two salaries.

The average house price in London is £554,000, while the average salary is £49,692. Three decades ago a typical home in England cost three to four times the average salary, now it is nearly eight times.

But finding a partner is becoming harder for Gen Z (those born between 1997 and 2012), thanks to the rising cost of dating. Will Shirras, 25, works in tech and earns £40,000 a year. He lives with his parents and is saving, but says he can no longer afford to go on as many dates as he did.

He said: “It does get expensive paying for dinner each time and I don’t mind offering but it easily gets to £80 or £100. If the date doesn’t go well, that is another major downside. I think to myself, is it even worth the money at this point?”

Even casual outings are now a steep cost. The other day Shirras took a date to a National Gallery exhibition, and tickets were £20 each. Since 2021, the cost of going to the cinema, theatre and concerts has gone up almost 37 per cent according to the Office for National Statistics.

The Intergenerational Foundation, which works to promote economic fairness, said its research suggests that financial pressures are changing modern dating, with more than half the Gen Z adults questioned saying that they wanted a relationship but could not afford one due to rising housing costs and squeezed incomes.

> “I would even take a date to play tennis — way cheaper than some fancy dinner

Will Shirras has questioned whether some dates were “even worth the money”

The foundation said that in 2023, some 46 per cent of those aged 25 to 29 were single, up from 29 per cent in 2013. It suggested that financial stress was the single biggest barrier stopping young people from finding a partner, with 54 per cent of 25 to 29-year-olds saying that they could not afford to live with a partner. A figure that rises to 66 per cent for those aged 18 to 24. More than half of respondents said they felt they get the chance to meet new people, making dating feel out of reach.

Jonah, 25, a social media manager from London, said that day-to-day spending in the capital had put an end to his romantic life. His income is mostly taken up by essential costs such as rent, utility bills, and food, leaving no room for romantic outings. After living in Plymouth, where overheads were lower, London prices have transformed his social habits. “My pay isn’t incredible at the moment, so I need to prioritise other things such as my rent, bills, and the food shop. I’m not really dating right now simply because I can’t afford it,” Jonah said.

“It is certainly difficult, and if I’ve been on a few dates in a month, it’s noticeable. I just have less money.”

Jonah said he struggles to afford to go out to dinner any more. “The cost of dating can get up to a few hundred quid a month, which is really expensive. Cooking at home costs me just five ingredients and a bottle of wine. I would even take a date to play tennis or go running, which is way cheaper than going out to some fancy dinner. I sometimes plan dates around happy hour.”

Conor Nakkan, a researcher from the Intergenerational Foundation, said: “Young people haven’t suddenly stopped wanting relationships — too many are being priced out of the conditions that allow them to begin.”

Anton Kui, another researcher, added: “Most young people still want a partner, but many face financial pressure, unaffordable housing, and fewer opportunities to meet people.

“The government cannot make people fall in love, but it can shape the conditions in which relationships form. Making housing more affordable and protecting pubs, cafés, youth clubs and other community spaces would give young people a better chance of building the lives they want.”

Analysis by Barclays suggests that young people across the UK spend more than £111 a month on dates and dating apps, adding up to more than £1,300 a year.

Moe Ari Brown, who described himself as a “love and connection expert” from the dating app Hinge, said more people were opting for “low-pressure dates” where spending a lot of money isn’t necessary.

He said: “It allows for a safer and more laid-back environment where daters can gauge potential chemistry before exploring things further. These intentional, casual experiences let you show up as your full self without the added stress of high-stakes settings or big spending.”

Handelsbanken

Conversations.
Not chatbots.

Direct access to your relationship manager

A better way to bank is closer than you think

handelsbanken.co.uk

Personal and corporate banking
Wealth management

Our wealth and investment management services are provided by Handelsbanken Wealth. Handelsbanken Wealth is a trading name of Handelsbanken Wealth & Asset Management Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in the conduct of investment and protection business, and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Handelsbanken plc. Tax advice which does not contain any investment element is not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registered Head Office: 25 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5HA, UK. Registered in England No: 4132340.

Handelsbanken is the trading name of Handelsbanken plc, which is incorporated in England and Wales with company number 11305395. Registered office: 25 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5HA, UK. Handelsbanken plc is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Financial Services Register number 806852. Handelsbanken plc is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ).

Money

Investment Eye

Five bold ideas to get the nation investing

Lord Lee of Trafford outlines his plans for boosting our wealth

If you are a financial "miss-out" — keeping cash under the bed or in the bank, shunning stock market investment — you have consolation, knowing that, sadly, there are millions like you.

The figures are stark. Only about 8 per cent of UK personal wealth is in equities or mutual funds, compared with 33 per cent in the US. Indeed, UK residents own only 11.6 per cent of UK-quoted shares.

The miss-out is evidenced by the fact that, over a ten-year period, £100 in the bank would have delivered an average return of £134 compared with a similar amount in the FTSE all-share index returning £229.

Estimates vary, but there is clearly a huge amount of cash available for investment, which if only partly invested in UK equities would boost personal wealth and the level of UK stocks. It is universally accepted that the latter are undervalued — you only have to look at the number of our plcs being taken over at substantial premiums. So what has brought about this situation and what could be done to boost the number of private investors?

My long-held view is that the prime responsibility lies with television — probably still the dominant medium for those with funds to invest, it offers near-zero coverage of UK-quoted companies. It's a huge missed opportunity.

To be fair to television, politicians and regulators are equally culpable, effectively inhibiting TV producers from such coverage for fear of legal or other consequences. I have argued all this with City ministers of the years, to no avail. It is such a tragedy because we have so many fine quoted companies that would make entertaining viewing and attractive investment opportunities, and I certainly believe viewer support would be there. Witness the success of *Dragons' Den* — it wouldn't be difficult to create a stock market variant or perhaps have personalities talking about their favourite shares or even a programme on the portfolios of Isa millionaires.

Recently I was in Stoke-on-Trent visiting Portmeirion, the owners of the Spode and Royal Worcester brands, meeting the new, enthused management team and viewing their production — it would make engaging TV. So I would like to see the government bring together senior TV executives and the relevant regulators

The success of Dragons' Den shows the power of TV to promote investing

and find a way to facilitate acceptable coverage of our quoted companies. This would be the first and most important change I would make.

Second, I would like a clear taxation differential between dividends from quoted companies and interest from banks or similar. The former could be attractively free of tax up to a certain figure, but excluding wealthier investors with greater dividend income, who no doubt already take advantage of the generous Isa tax reliefs.

Third, and I know this would be controversial, I would exclude overseas holdings in all future Isas. Some would go further and compel existing holdings to be sold, but my view is that this would be too harsh and also unfairly retrospective. If people want to invest overseas, fine. But why should we give them tax relief to do so? I accept this will involve some arbitrary decisions, particularly concerning funds or investment trust holdings, but these problems could be overcome.

Fourth, I fail to see why grandparents like me aren't allowed to take out Junior Isas for grandchildren, instead of having to do it via their parents. The present restriction has no real logic but is another unnecessary Treasury rule that should be removed.

Finally, and continuing on the theme of young people, I would like to see quoted companies giving a small quantity of shares to the secondary schools in their local areas from which they might recruit or where their employees' children are being educated.

This concept lay behind a scheme I and a number of senior peers put to Jeremy Hunt when he was chancellor. Our idea was that the government would donate £5,000 worth of shares from its main NatWest holding to each of the 4,000-plus secondary schools across the country, if they wanted them and agreed to hold for the long term.

The thinking was that the pupils of each school would decide how to spend the NatWest dividend of about £350 — perhaps on subsidising a school trip, donating to a local charity or buying more shares. But it would be their decision. Thus, for about a £20 million cost to the exchequer, a whole generation of young people would become aware of what a bank does and what a dividend is.

2.4m
The number of viewers tuning in to watch episodes of the latest Dragons' Den series on BBC One

While Hunt was quite taken with the idea, the election intervened.

It is this type of scheme I would encourage plcs to adopt — particularly smaller quoted regional companies — and would hope that the Quoted Companies Alliance would support and promote it.

Taken together, I believe the above measures, perhaps with stamp duty alleviation, could bring about a positive cultural change towards investing in the UK and materially boost the number of private investors.

Lord Lee of Trafford became the UK's first Isa millionaire in 2003 and is the author of How to Make a Million — Slowly

Aberdeen Equity Income Trust
Managed by Aberdeen

Discover our best UK investment ideas

Tax efficient investing

So, you're looking for a diversified UK portfolio with potential to deliver income as well as real capital growth?

At Aberdeen Equity Income Trust, we explore opportunities from across the UK, seeking out companies with robust fundamentals and strong dividend potential.

We invest in UK companies of all sizes, focusing on long term characteristics, rather than the short term noise that comes with shifting political or economic conditions.

Please remember, the value of shares and the income from them can go down as well as up and you may get back less than the amount invested.

Tax treatment depends on the individual circumstances of each investor and may be subject to change in the future.

Find out more aberdeenequityincome.com

Eligible for Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) and Self-Invested Personal Pensions (SIPPs).

Invest in your future via leading platforms.

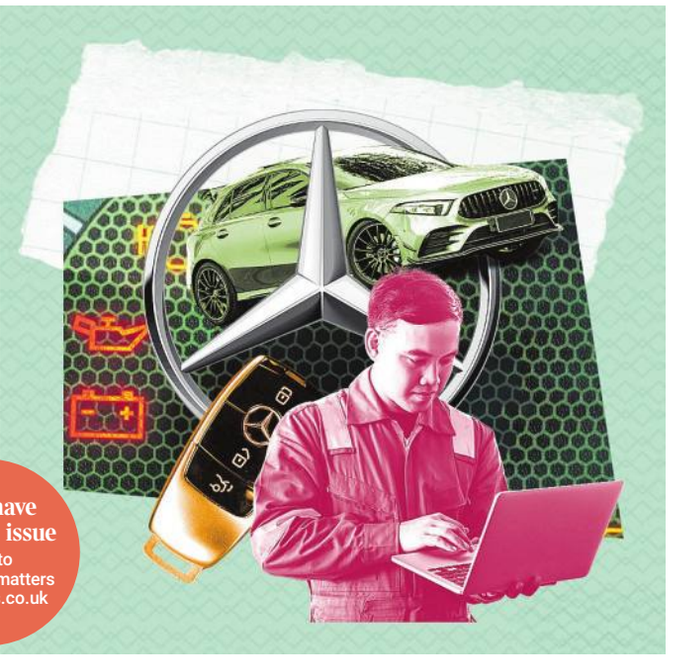
The Key Information Document is available on the website.

Issued by abrdn Fund Managers Limited, registered in England and Wales (740118) at 280 Bishopsgate, London, EC2M 4AG. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in the UK.

aberdeen

Your Money Matters Holly Thomas

Our £47k car keeps losing power. Why is Mercedes ignoring us?



If you have a money issue write to yourmoneymatters@thetimes.co.uk

Our consumer champion gets to grips with your problems

In late January we took delivery of a new Mercedes A35 AMG from a local Mercedes-Benz dealership. Initially we were delighted with the car. But after 38 days a warning light came on and it went into "limp mode" where there is very little power. This problem has recurred between 40 and 50 times, causing no end of problems. A holiday to Cornwall in May was spoilt with the car losing power on virtually every journey. To get rid of the warning and restore power we had to pull over, switch off and then restart the engine.

Mercedes-Benz attempted to fix the problem in April by uploading new software but a couple of weeks later it became obvious this hadn't worked.

In Cornwall we called out Mercedes-Benz Roadside Assistance because both the engine diagnostics and reduced power warning lights were coming on. The mechanic checked the car over and uploaded the latest version of software. On our return home the company picked the car up to again try to repair the problem. It had the car for 31 days and replaced the transmission valve unit and electrohydraulic controller unit and we took it back on June 12.

During the time the car was being worked on we emailed Mercedes-Benz Financial Solutions to inform them that we wished to formally reject the car. We had lost faith in its ability to fix the problem. Six weeks on we are still waiting on Mercedes-Benz to confirm or decline our rejection request.

Part of our reason for buying a Mercedes was its reputation for reliability and customer service but we have never dealt with a company that has failed so miserably in both these key areas.

Please can you help us as no department seems to have taken ownership of our complaint, they just seem to fob us off and hope we'll go away.
Julia, Somerset

HOLLY THOMAS WRITES

You and your husband decided to splash out on a high-performance car with a price tag of £47,340. You opted to take out finance, paying a deposit of £14,500 and agreeing to pay £322.14 a month for four years.

The model you chose has a 2.0-litre turbocharged engine that accelerates from 0-62mph in 4.7 seconds, but it sounds like such acceleration has been a pipe dream for you thanks to the car's tendency to lose power. Limp mode is where the engine goes into a protective state and power is severely limited, where RPMs are restricted to roughly 3,000 and you are locked in a single gear, usually second or third.

Understandably you had safety concerns about driving the car, especially about being on the motorway when suddenly losing power, which could prove dangerous for you and other drivers. The recurring problem wore you down and so you decided that it was time to give up on this vehicle.

Under the Consumer Rights Act a buyer can reject a car within 30 days of delivery and get a full refund if it is faulty or not fit for purpose.

The car started to go wrong after 38 days, just outside the window. It is still possible to reject a car after 30 days, but you need to give the seller the chance to repair or replace it before you request a refund. You did so on several occasions, but since you have asked for your money back, Mercedes has left you hanging.

I nudged Mercedes into gear and it has agreed to accept your rejection. It repaid your deposit of £14,500, with interest of £294.37. It also paid you £750 as a goodwill gesture in recognition of the inconvenience.

You were also hoping to be reimbursed for the five months of loan instalments totalling £1,610.70, but Mercedes refused, citing the Consumer Rights Act under which a business is entitled to apply a reasonable deduction for the use the customer has had of the vehicle. Mercedes told you that its approach was to retain the monthly instalments already paid.

You said: "We are very grateful you got this moving for us. We feel it's unfair that we weren't reimbursed for some or all of the finance payments we made during the time the car wasn't working properly and the time it was being fixed. But we're glad to have finally handed the car back and now looking forward to delivery of our new Audi."

Mercedes-Benz said: "We were sorry to hear of the issue Julia and her husband experienced. Mercedes-Benz Financial Services has addressed their concerns and agreed a resolution."

The Consumer Rights Act says that if a fault rears its head after six months, the onus is on the buyer to prove that the product was faulty at the time of delivery to pursue a claim for repair or replacement. Send your proof in writing and you should then allow the seller or finance company up to eight weeks to investigate your complaint and issue a final response.

Scott Dixon, a consumer champion who runs the Complaints Resolver website, said it was common for dealers to be difficult about rejecting a car under the Consumer Rights Act.

"I've seen every trick in the book from dealers who engage in sludge tactics to drag disputes out. The insurance industry often use what's referred to as the three Ds: delay, deny, defend — and some car dealerships and retailers have latched on to this. They often play the numbers game knowing that the majority of complaints will fall away."

Dixon said that buyers still had a responsibility to do their own due diligence. "I see so many consumers go in blind without doing the most basic of checks, but caveat emptor (buyer beware) applies.

"Don't rush into a purchase and never pay by bank transfer. It's worth paying for a vehicle checking service to see if a car has been accident damaged, an insurance write-off, stolen or has outstanding finance, and get a mechanic to check it over. Don't rely on a '300 point check' or similar promises by dealerships and go by your gut instinct — there will always be another car."

£2,121,996
– what Your Money Matters has saved readers this year

TRY OUR MONEY MoT
Scan the QR code to complete our online quiz, and get tailored advice to help manage your finances

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES
Tech Summit
The Age of the AI Agent, Who's Really in Control?
Tuesday, November 10, 2026
Speakers include

Kathleen Fisher
CEO at ARIA

Aidan Gomez
Co-founder & CEO at Cohere

Katie Prescott
Co-host of The Times Tech Podcast and Technology Business Editor at The Times

Dawn Bloxwich
Director of Responsible Development and Innovation at Google DeepMind

Dr. Ross Harper
Co-Founder & CEO at Limbic

Judith Dada
Co-CEO, Langdock and Senior Partner at Visionaries

Headline Sponsor
Adobe
Supporting Sponsor
Raspberry Pi
Go to thetimes.com/events or use the QR code to book now

Money Unit trusts

Unit trust and open-ended investment company prices

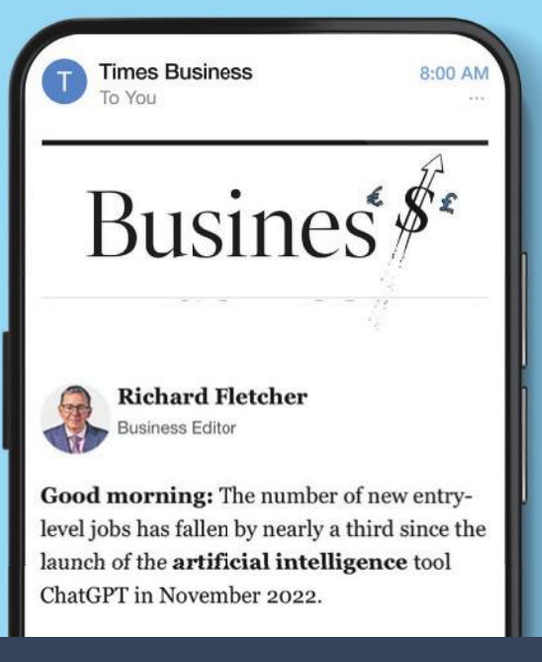
	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS				
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573				
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	126.51	...	-1.57	8.29
UK Equity A ‡	377.93	...	-8.62	4.18
UK Growth ‡	10046.08	...	-216.48	2.30
ARTEMIS FUND MGRS				
0800 092 2051				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	387.42	...	-3.22	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	217.86	...	-1.82	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	232.10	...	-1.92	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	66.44	...	-0.52	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	789.00	...	-13.57	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	302.41	...	-5.20	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	92.79	...	-0.67	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	896.52	...	-3.66	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	713.06	...	-4.14	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4274.51	...	-36.41	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	96.55	...	+1.06	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	114.85	...	-1.34	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	51.92	...	-0.61	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	114.64	...	-1.35	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	51.61	...	-0.60	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1300.25	...	-28.58	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2282.81	...	-55.36	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1062.56	...	-24.13	...
AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT				
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511				
Health ‡	3330.00	...	-114.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2075.00	...	-46.00	1.10
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	323.10	...	-5.30	0.35
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	229.90	...	-5.40	1.10
AXA FUND MANAGERS				
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808				
UK/Global Investment Companies				
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.10	...	...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.30	...	...	1.51
CIS UNIT MANAGERS				
08457 46 46 46				
European Growth ‡	290.90	...	-4.30	1.12
Sus Leaders ‡	1007.00	...	-18.00	1.47
UK Growth ‡@	863.70	...	-12.80	1.71
UK Income ‡	256.30	...	-3.50	3.85
CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT				
Dealing 020 7426 6232				
Winchester ‡	5648.37	...	-60.63	0.61
COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS				
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083				
Share Class 1-Retail				
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1565.00	...	-20.00	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	589.40	...	-9.40	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	389.40	...	-9.90	...
Strategic Bd ‡	224.80	...	-2.60	4.10
EDENTREE INV MGMT				
0800 358 3010				
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡	486.80	...	-8.80	1.65
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡	450.40	...	-7.60	0.53
Sust Mgd Income ‡	139.30	...	-1.90	4.03
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	84.12	...	-0.86	4.99
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡	245.90	...	-5.50	1.80
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	316.20	...	-9.10	1.50
FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL				
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181				
Amer Spec ‡	2863.00	...	-65.00	...
American ‡	7870.00	...	-158.00	...
Euro Opps ‡	727.70	...	-9.20	0.49
European ‡	4310.00	...	-73.00	0.79
Global Focus ‡	3618.00	...	-92.00	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.10	...	-0.15	6.32
Global Special Sits ‡	8749.00	...	-195.00	...
Japan ‡	996.40	...	-7.60	0.33
Moneyblder Bal ‡	47.97	...	-0.79	3.60
Moneybldr Inc ‡	27.84	...	-0.24	5.08
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡	199.44	...	-3.14	2.51
Special Sits ‡	7441.00	...	-89.00	1.66
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	103.10	...	-2.60	1.76
HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS				
01296 386 386				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Share Class C				
Corporate Bond ‡	36.89	...	-0.38	4.70
Intl Gwth ‡	213.50	...	-4.10	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	107.30	...	-1.70	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	119.10	...	-2.00	...
HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)				
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6				
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)				
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1609.00	...	-28.00	0.78
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1811.00	...	-33.00	2.34
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1049.00	...	-20.00	2.39
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	436.00	...	-6.40	2.55
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	177.10	...	-2.60	2.67
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	399.90	...	-9.50	2.94
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	216.80	...	-5.20	2.93
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1096.00	...	-18.00	2.69
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	493.10	...	-7.80	2.83
Japan Ind Acc ‡	238.80	...	...	1.42
Japan Ind Inc ‡	173.00	...	-0.10	1.46
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1104.00	...	+6.00	1.50
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	624.40	...	+3.20	1.52
HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class				
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	308.10	...	-3.40	4.00
Income Acc ‡	1062.00	...	...	3.28
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.40	...	...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.90	...	...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	220.50	...	-2.60	3.05
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	85.47	...	-1.03	3.11
HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)				
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1239.00	...	-22.00	0.77
INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD				
Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677				
Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121				
Invesco Funds				
Corp Bond ‡	228.64	...	-2.49	4.16
High Income Dis ‡	427.25	...	-4.13	3.19
Income & Growth Dis ‡	494.01	...	-8.09	3.17
Income Inc ‡	1651.02	...	-18.95	2.90
Money Acc ‡	108.18	...	+0.06	3.68
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	90.98	...	-0.75	5.84
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1368.09	...	-22.55	1.50
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1310.76	...	-43.41	1.25
INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD				
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900				
OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv				
American A Acc ‡	836.84	...	-31.15	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	467.23	...	-5.23	2.66
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	268.04	...	-2.91	2.54
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	327.93	...	-5.14	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	120.65	...	-1.90	0.97
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	374.68	...	-2.02	3.91
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.20	...	-0.36	5.34
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc ‡	183.68	...	-1.02	5.80
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	85.37	...	-0.47	7.64
Emerging Mkts Equity A Acc ‡	297.10	...	+1.21	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1240.53	...	-17.70	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	293.51	...	-7.73	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	387.32	...	-14.14	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2082.07	...	-45.06	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	606.00	...	-24.34	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	529.07	...	-16.78	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	405.89	...	-12.87	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2620.62	...	-89.17	1.08
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	901.26	...	-30.66	1.09
For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)				
JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS				
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646				
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	112.10	...	-1.30	4.60
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	103.00	...	-0.30	5.60
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	351.40	...	-5.50	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	150.80	...	-2.30	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1267.00	...	-34.00	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	303.80	...	-3.90	...
Epn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3159.00	...	-66.00	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	32.84	...	-0.27	6.20
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6456.00	...	-96.00	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	86.51	...	-1.54	2.60
Global Tech A Acc ‡	6953.00	...	+17.00	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	176.37	...	-2.88	2.30
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	188.50	...	-0.30	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	332.70	...	-5.10	1.70
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	159.70	...	-1.90	2.60
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	230.10	...	-2.80	2.60
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	226.50	...	-2.70	4.30
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	54.71	...	-0.65	4.30
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	94.54	...	-0.78	6.10
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	207.00	...	...	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	195.60	...	-3.60	0.90
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	2952.00	...	-37.00	...
J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT				
OEIC				
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	700.70	...	-11.20	2.55
JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD				
020 7581 3020				
Distribution & Growth ‡	123.47	...	-1.85	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	589.13	...	-6.51	0.71
European ‡	3920.75	...	-43.00	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1369.16	...	+1.77	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	426.65	...	-1.23	3.87
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	343.10	...	-5.35	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	828.15	...	-15.32	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	470.05	...	-2.87	3.40
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	604.11	...	-13.26	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	286.23	...	-4.68	1.75
UK Growth ‡	274.41	...	-7.68	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	993.93	...	-23.25	4.58
LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD				
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956				
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	794.70	...	-12.70	1.90
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	474.60	...	-7.50	1.90
Fixed Int Acc ‡@	148.40	...	-1.70	4.70
Fixed Int Dist ‡@	60.64	...	-1.38	4.70
Global Health ‡	121.80	...	-4.50	1.00
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	240.80	...	-0.60	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	153.60	...	-0.80	5.80
Japan Ind Acc ‡	114.40	...	-0.20	1.20
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	434.30	...	+1.30	1.30
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	532.00	...	-8.30	2.50
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	230.40	...	-3.50	2.50
US Ind Acc ‡	1415.00	...	-15.00	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	466.70	...	-6.10	0.90
M&G SECURITIES				
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Charifund Inc ‡	1896.57	...	-23.89	5.14
Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2				
Extra Income Inc ‡	815.05	...	-9.05	5.17
Glb & Fxd Int Inc ‡	65.34	...	-0.74	4.90
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.41	...	-0.26	6.34
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	100.91	...	-0.96	1.58
Index Trckr Inc ‡	103.35	...	-1.64	3.04
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.00	...	-0.08	4.35
UK Select A Inc ‡	3219.34	...	-92.90	2.72
Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3				
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.37	...	-0.33	5.14
Dividend Inc ‡	66.14	...	-0.70	5.40
Recovery A Inc ‡	138.73	...	-2.57	2.92
Sml Cos Inc ‡	351.03	...	-8.09	2.92
Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4				
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡	159.96	...	-1.92	3.83
MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST				
0808 005 5555				
High Income ‡	86.78	...	-0.30	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	296.10	...	-1.00	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	710.90	...	-10.80	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	314.10	...	-4.80	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	474.70	...	-4.60	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1086.00	...	-10.40	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡	1333.00	...	-6.00	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡	741.70	...	-3.80	0.20
MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT				
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962				
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)				
Class A Shares				
Equity				
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40	...	...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65	...	...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69	...	...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53	...	...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68	...	...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88	...	...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12	...	...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45	...	...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1088.23	...	-33.68	4.39
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1713.94	...	-53.14	4.35
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1150.19	...	-35.66	4.47
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	13879.69	...	-449.96	0.33
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1604.97	...	-54.23	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1710.74	...	-57.82	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3733.18	...	-121.03	0.33
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1505.06	...	-44.79	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1471.36	...	-41.10	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1511.87	...	-42.29	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1499.57	...	-44.66	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1528.03	...	-42.69	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	142.89	...	-1.48	5.04
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	96.52	...	-1.01	5.06
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1364.36	...	-14.25	4.89
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3022.43	...	-31.58	4.89
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2447.20	...	-63.15	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1470.18	...	-40.87	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2576.00	...	-66.61	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1521.85	...	-42.39	...
SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS				
08457 413002				
Equity Inc Inc ‡	233.50	...	-2.90	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.80	...	...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	643.10	...	-13.20	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	308.80	...	-6.30	...
SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD				
0141 248 6100				
Far Eastern Inc	617.07	649.47	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1391.99	1469.12	-1.84	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.49	1508.70	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.23	593.38	...	7.81
SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS				
0845 300 2244				
Overseas Growth Investment Funds				
Tracker & Special Investment Funds				
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	598.10	...	-9.20	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	272.20	...	-4.20	2.50
UK & Income Investment Funds				
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	324.50	...	-3.60	4.20
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	106.10	...	-1.20	4.20
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	455.30	...	-14.20	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	297.40	...	-1.50	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	69.75	...	-0.37	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡@	552.10	...	-10.90	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡@	148.00	...	-2.90	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	227.20	...	-0.90	4.60
Strat In A Inc ‡@	85.30	...	-0.35	4.60
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	133.80	...	-2.90	2.50
OEIC B Class				
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	662.70	...	-10.20	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	270.70	...	-4.10	2.60
OEIC C Class				
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	130.70	...	-2.80	2.60
STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS				
0845 279 3003				
Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares				
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	97.49	...	-0.86	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	50.18	...	-0.44	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	107.50	...	-1.00	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	274.30	...	-5.80	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	200.10	...	-3.30	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	263.80	...	-4.20	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	185.10	...	-1.00	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	47.25	...	-0.26	...
Managed Acc ‡	514.80	...	-4.90	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	251.70	...	-7.90	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	787.00	...	-27.10	...
SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS				
Enquiries:0141 222 1151				
Balanced A Acc ‡	185.30	...	-2.15	2.02
Balanced A Inc ‡	154.28	...	-1.81	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	132.13	...	-1.19	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	103.78	...	-0.94	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	495.28	...	-6.47	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	431.95	...	-5.64	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	489.06	...	-6.41	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	316.71	...	-3.43	2.17
THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS				
Client Serv: 0800 0684000				
Retail Shares Class 1				
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	38.89	...	-0.42	...
Threadneedle MnthNy Etr Inc Inc ‡	99.06	...	-1.76	...
Threadneedle StrlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	53.54	...	-1.23	...
Threadneedle StrlingCorp Acc ‡	53.47	...	-1.18	...
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	37.93	...	-1.48	...
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.06	...	-0.57	...
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	115.44	...	-3.16	...
Threadneedle UK Growth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡	189.39	...	-5.06	...
Threadneedle UK Tst1 Rtl ‡	246.65	...	-3.42	...
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	87.25	...	-1.64	...
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	162.31	...	-4.69	...
Threadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	196.29	...	-2.85	...
For Resolution see Ignis				
TU FUND MANAGERS LTD				
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis @	968.20	968.20	-31.10	1.26

This list contains unit trusts and Oeics widely held by private investors. The weekly price change is based on a Friday-to-Thursday trading period.* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡ Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

Expert business analysis straight to your inbox

For the latest financial and economic news from our business editors, subscribers can sign up to the business newsletter by going to 'My newsletters'.



To try a digital subscription, visit thetimes.com/subscribe

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Best buys

Data supplied by defaqto
Smarter financial decisions

Savings

Easy access (without introductory bonus)

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
cahoot	via website	Simple Saver	£1	4.52%
Tipton & Coseley	via app	Reward Saver L	£100	4.30%
Oxbury	via website	Easy Access Autumn	£1,000	4.30%
thisbank	via website	Triple Access Savings L	£1,000	4.28%
Charter Savings Bank	via website	Easy Access	£1	4.25%

Long-term fixed rates

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
GB Bank	via website	5 Year Fixed Rate Bond	£1,000	5.03%
Shawbrook Bank	via website	5 Year Fixed Rate Bond	£1,000	5.01%
Atom Bank	via app	5 Year Fixed Saver	£50	5.00%
thisbank	via website	5 Year Fixed Term Savings	£100	5.00%
Chetwood Bank	via website	5 Year Fixed Rate	£1,000	5.00%

Easy-access cash Isas

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Hargreaves Lansdown	via website	Shawbrook Easy Access Cash Isa	£1	4.52%
Tipton & Coseley	via app	Isa Reward Saver L	£100	4.30%
Vanquis Bank	via website	Triple Access Cash Isa L	£1,000	4.30%
Charter Savings Bank	via website	Easy Access Cash Isa	£1	4.26%
Atom Bank	via app	Easy Access Cash Isa	£1	4.25%

Fixed cash Isas

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Charter Savings Bank	via website	1 Year Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£5,000	4.74%
Skipton BS	via website	18 Mnth Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£1	4.64%
Tandem	via app	2 Year Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£1	4.83%
Charter Savings Bank	via website	3 Year Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£5,000	4.83%
Tandem	via app	5 Year Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£1	4.93%

Lifetime cash Isas

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Moneybox	via app	Cash Lifetime Isa	£1	4.45%
Tembo	via app	Barclays - Cash Lifetime Isa	£1	4.40%
Plum	via app	Lifetime Isa	£1	4.32%
Paragon	via website	Cash Lifetime Isa	£1	3.51%
Bath BS	via website/app	Lifetime Isa	£1	2.60%

Regular savings accounts

Provider	Contact	Account	Min Mntly	AER
Santander	via website/app	Regular Saver CV	£1	8.00%
Bank of Scotland	via website	Monthly Saver CF	£25	8.00%
Lloyds Bank	via website/app	Club Lloyds Monthly Saver CF	£25	8.00%
Lloyds Bank	via website/app	Monthly Saver CF	£25	8.00%
The Co-operative Bank	via website	Regular Saver CV	£1	7.00%

Pension annuities

Single life

Provider	Contact	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Standard Life	0808 164 0164	£6,976.59	£7,600.16	£8,252.74
Canada Life	0345 606 0708	£7,019.75	£7,626.63	£8,257.16
Legal & General	0808 304 9447	£6,866.64	£7,543.68	£8,136.12
Scottish Widows	0345 757 3494	£6,958.42	£7,675.00	£8,447.12
Aviva	0800 051 4094	£6,922.49	£7,431.67	£8,147.67

Joint life

Provider	Contact	Couple: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Standard Life	0808 164 0164	£6,688.57	£7,217.41	£7,761.39
Canada Life	0345 606 0708	£6,778.64	£7,275.29	£7,911.10
Legal & General	0808 304 9447	£6,613.44	£7,003.44	£7,653.00
Scottish Widows	0345 757 3494	£6,731.99	£7,253.45	£7,926.62
Aviva	0800 051 4094	£6,711.11	£6,871.53	£7,478.31

Based on a £100k pension pot. **Data supplied by Kellands, a chartered financial planner**

Mortgages

First-time buyer mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Redmptn Charge Until
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.99% V	for 2 years	95%	£0	None
Skipton BS	0345 607 9825	4.84% V	for 2 years	95%	£995	None
West Bromwich BS	0800 298 0008	5.40% F	to 31.12.29	95%	£0	To 31.12.29
HSBC	0800 494 999	5.34% F	to 31.10.31	95%	£0	To 31.10.31
NatWest	0800 096 9527	5.36% F	to 30.11.31	95%	£0	To 30.11.31

2-year fixed rates

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
Halifax	0345 850 3705	4.77%	to 30.11.28	60%	£0	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.76%	for 2 years	75%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.97%	for 2 years	80%	£0	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.97%	for 2 years	85%	£0	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.90%	for 2 years	90%	£490	P

Short-term fixed-rate mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.60%	for 5 years	60%	£490	P
Yorkshire BS	0345 1200 874	4.65%	to 31.01.32	75%	£1,495	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.83%	for 5 years	80%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.83%	for 5 years	85%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.94%	for 5 years	90%	£490	P

Long-term fixed-rate mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
Santander	0800 555 100	5.01%	to 02.12.36	60%	£999	R
Santander	0800 555 100	5.06%	to 02.12.36	75%	£999	R
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	5.49%	for 10 years	80%	£999	P
Santander	0800 555 100	5.39%	to 02.12.36	85%	£999	P
Santander	0800 555 100	5.59%	to 02.12.36	90%	£999	P

Discounted variable-rate mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.05% V	for 2 years	60%	£999	P
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.17% V	for 2 years	75%	£999	P
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.17% V	for 2 years	80%	£999	P
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.29% V	for 2 years	85%	£999	P&R
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.65% V	for term	90%	£490	P&R

Buy-to-let mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
The Mortgage Works	0345 607 3021	4.29% V	to 30.11.28	75%	1%	P&R
The Mortgage Works	0345 607 3021	4.34% V	to 30.11.28	75%	£1,495	P&R
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.53% F	to 31.10.31	75%	£3,999	P
The Mortgage Works	0345 607 3021	4.96% F	to 30.11.31	75%	£0	P&R
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.78% F	to 31.10.31	75%	£1,999	P

The selections above are based on a combination of initial rate, fee and incentive available.

National Savings & investments

	Notice or Term	Min	AER	Interest Paid
Accounts and bonds				
Guaranteed Growth Bond	5 Yr Bnd	£500	4.85% F	Maturity
Direct Saver	None	£1	3.75%	Yearly
Income Bond	None	£500	3.75%	Monthly
Tax-free products				
Junior Isa	Age 18	£1	3.70%	Yearly
Direct Isa	None	£1	3.80%	Yearly

Personal loans

Fixed monthly repayment on £10,000 for 5 years

Provider	Contact	Rep APR	Amount per month	Total repaid
M&S Bank	via website	5.9%	£192.15	£11,529.00
TSB	via website	6.1%	£193.03	£11,581.80
AA	via website	6.4%	£194.35	£11,661.00
Santander	via website	6.4%	£194.35	£11,661.00
Tesco Bank	via website	6.4%	£194.35	£11,661.00

Borrowing rates and availability of products are subject to individual credit ratings.

Credit cards

Introductory rate for balance transfers

Provider	Contact	Product name	Bal trans Transfer	Bal trans fee	Purch APR
TSB	0345 8353846	Platinum BT	0% 1st 38 mths	3.49%	24.95%
HSBC	03455 873 444	Balance Transfer	0% 1st 36 mths	3.09%	24.90%
NatWest	03457 888 444	Longer BT	0% 1st 36 mths	3.10%	24.90%
Virgin Money	0800 011 3210	Balance Transfer	0% 1st 36 mths	3.10%	24.90%
Barclaycard	0800 151 0900	Platinum BT	0% 1st 36 mths	3.15%	24.90%

Introductory rate for purchases

Provider	Contact	Product name	Introductory Term	Purch APR
M&S Bank	0800 997 996	Purchase Plus	0% 1st 26 mths	24.90%
TSB	0345 835 3846	Platinum Purchase	0% 1st 26 mths	24.95%
Lloyds Bank	0345 603 7239	0% Purchase and BT	0% 1st 25 mths	24.94%
Barclaycard	0800 151 0900	Platinum BT	0% 1st 24 mths	24.90%
HSBC	03455 873 444	Purchase Plus	0% 1st 24 mths	24.90%

Cashback credit card

Provider	Contact	Product name	Purchase APR	Cashback
American Express	0800 917 8047	Cashback Everyday	29.1% Intro	0.50%-1.00% standard 5%/5mth (max £125)
Santander	0800 085 1759	Rewards	24.90%	0.25% Standard 3%/12 months P
Lloyds Bank	0345 603 7239	Ultra	14.94% Intro	0.25% Standard 1%/12 months
Virgin Money	0800 011 3210	Everyday Cashback	24.90% Intro	0.25% Standard 1%/3mth (max £15 a mth)
Natwest	03457 888 444	Travel Reward	27.90%	0.1%-1.00% standard T on spend over £1 a year

Borrowing rates are subject to credit ratings. Terms apply to all cashback. T = Eligible travel spend only for higher cashback; P = Eligible travel and eating out spend only for higher cashback

Current accounts

Credit interest

Provider	Contact	Account name	Account Fee	AER
Nationwide BS	0800 30 20 10	FlexDirect	None	5.00% AE
Bank of Scotland	0345 721 3141	Vantage Classic	None	3.00% B
Lloyds Bank	0345 300 0000	Club Lloyds	None E	3.00% B
Bank of Scotland	0345 721 3141	Vantage Silver	£11.50pm	3.00% B
Lloyds Bank	0345 300 0000	Club Lloyds Silver	£11.50pm E	3.00% B

Authorised overdrafts

Provider	Contact	Account name	Account Fee	EAR	0% OD limit
Starling	0207 930 4450	Current Account	None	15.0%	£0
First Direct	0345 600 2424	1st Account	None	39.9%	£250
Virgin Money	0800 678 3654	M Plus Account	None	19.9%	£0
Virgin Money	0800 678 3654	Club M Account	£14 pm	19.9%	£0
Lloyds Bank	0345 300 0000	Club Lloyds	None E	29.9%	£100

Current account interest rates paid up to a specified level, terms may apply to qualify for rates shown. A = Introductory rate. B = Certain balance needed for high interest. C = Existing customer. D = Discounted variable rate. E = Terms apply. F = Fixed rate. L = Limited Access. V = Variable rate. All savings rates are AER variable unless stated. Methods of opening and operating accounts vary. All rates and terms subject to change. No liability accepted for any loss arising from use of this information. Readers who are not financial professionals should seek expert advice.
Rates correct at 11am September, 10 2026

Listen for free now

DAB RADIO FREE APP 'PLAY TIMES RADIO'

TIMESRadio

Money Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's trailing 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities are based on closing prices. Investment trust high and low prices are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
86¾	33	Aston Martin Lag	34½	+ ½	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
265	179¾	**Aberdeen Group**‡	248¼	– 1¼	5.9	11.5
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM◆	1⅛	+ ¼	...	-5.4
4128	2624	**Admiral**‡	3786		3.8	15.4
662½	414½	AJ Bell	584	+ ½	2.5	22.7
28761½	22177	AON Corp	22628¼	– 98⅛	1.1	...
1080	760	Arbuthnot◆‡	780	– 5	7.1	7.1
276½	151	Ashmore Group	212¼	– 2⅝	8.0	13.5
2126½	1590½	Australia & NZ	1975⅞	+ 33⅞	5.8	19.1
740½	590½	**Aviva**‡	707¼	+ 3⅝	5.7	26.3
1122	709	Banco Santander	1102	+ 18	1.5	14.1
554¼	353½	**Barclays**‡	493¾	+ 9⅜	2.3	11.3
17	4	Blue Star Capital◆	4¼		...	-2.2
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs◆	673	– 2	5.4	5.1
351½	212	Bridgepoint Grp	296¼	+ 1¾	3.2	59.2
378	265	Chesnara‡	354½	+ 8½	6.5	-70.2
496	349	City of London Grp	477	+ 16	6.9	16.1
556½	318½	Close Bros	398¼	+ 1	...	-6.0
787	203	CMC Markets	742	+ 8	1.9	27.0
3068¼	2057	Deutsche Bank	2979¼	– 2¼	2.9	11.0
93	73½	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	73⅞		0.9	...
240½	136	EPE Special Opps◆	213		...	8.8
80	52	Fiske◆	67½		1.7	5.9
92	70	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2300	Georgia Capital	4515	+ 160	...	2.8
57	43¼	Hansard Global	51	– 2	8.7	39.2
235	194	Helios U/W◆	232	+ 2½	4.3	8.0
1904	1281	**Hiscox**‡	1873	+ 23	2.1	14.0
1610	959½	**HSBC**‡	1552⅝	+ 23⅜	3.6	17.4
1956	1016	**IG Group**‡	1331	– 9	3.2	9.2
200	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt◆	103⅝	– ¼	9.7	6.5
2340	1424½	**ICG**	1903	– 7	4.6	11.4
145¾	115⅝	Intl Public P'ship‡	138½	+ ¾	6.3	-9.3
690	499⅜	**Investec**‡	660½	+ 9	5.8	8.6
78	60	Investment Co	77		...	...
75	48	IP Group	65⅞	+ ½	1.9	9.1
24	6	Jarvis Securities◆	7		50.0	2.2
214½	116¼	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	161⅜	+ 2¼	3.7	8.4
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs	620½		2.7	6.9
318½	217¼	**Legal & General**‡	287½	+ 1⅛	7.6	28.7
13750	7305	**Lion Finance Group**‡	13670	+ 290	2.3	9.6
358	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	288½	– 1	6.6	18.7
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp◆	38½		8.2	17.2
117⅞	81	**Lloyds Banking**‡	111⅛	+ 2	3.6	15.9
22	14	LMS Capital	15½		25.6	...
10140	6684	**London Stock Exchange**‡	8238	– 274	1.9	34.6
367⅛	248⅝	**M&G**‡	332½	+ ¼	6.2	26.4
327¼	154⅜	Man Group‡	305	– 1⅝	4.1	26.8
38¾	20	Manx Financial Grp◆	24½	+ ½	2.1	4.5
10	1¾	Marechale Capital◆	4⅝		...	-5.6
186⅝	98¼	Metro Bank	182¾	+ 3⅝	...	23.4
2621¼	1864⅝	National Australia	2052¾	+ 54¼	4.4	17.5
726	504	**NatWest Group**‡	697¾	+ 15⅜	5.0	13.0
833⅞	438½	PayPoint‡	601	+ 4	6.6	10.2
1238	910¼	**Prudential**‡	978¾	– 1¼	2.1	8.6
1¼	0⅛	Quantum Blockchain◆	0¼		...	-1.4
209	158½	Quilter‡	184¼	– ⅝	3.5	20.7
2500	1580	Rathbones Group‡	1626	– 12	6.2	15.1
329	245	Rockwood Strategic	313	– 4	...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	2000	– 10	5.8	10.2
3	0⅛	Sancus Lending◆	1		...	6.2
59⅛	40⅛	Schroder REIT	40½	– ¾	8.9	...
599½	365¾	**Schroders**	585		3.8	17.2
1575½	1038¾	**St James's Place**‡	1127	+ 6	1.6	11.3
2298	1351½	**Standard Chart'd**‡	2298	+ 28	2.2	15.9
960	620½	**Standard Life**	916	+ 5	6.1	-194.5
460	233	Billington Hldgs◆	405		2.7	38.9
230	133½	Boot (Henry)	141	– 1	5.6	8.0
373	271⅜	Breedon	327¾	+ 4¾	4.7	13.5
451⅝	331½	**British Land**	399		5.8	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469⅜	Derwent London‡	1836	– 5	4.5	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors◆	4¾		...	-2.8
19½	11	First Property◆‡	13½		1.9	7.5
75	29	Fletcher King◆	41½		5.4	28.0
62	31¾	Foxtons Group‡	36½	+ ½	3.2	8.5
640	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	568	+ 11	3.5	16.9
391½	241	Genuit Group‡	255¼	+ 1⅜	5.1	14.0
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	247½	– ½	4.4	9.1
1063	788½	Grafton Grp Units‡	954½	+ 10	4.0	13.6
202¼	149½	Grainger	165⅞	– ¼	5.1	6.1
377	270	Great Portland Est	304¾	– 1¾	2.7	0.0
391¾	280⅛	Hammerson‡	344	+ ⅞	5.3	...
185	116¼	Harworth Group	176¾	+ ⅜	1.0	60.8
400	215½	Heath (Samuel)◆‡	245		5.3	30.6
236¼	180⅝	Helical	198	+ 5½	1.3	41.0
143¾	77½	Ibstock‡	79	+ 1¼	2.5	98.8
161½	112	James Halstead◆	126¼	+ 2	7.1	13.0
3518	1348	Keller‡	2992	+ 36	2.7	14.8
11	6¼	SIG	9¼	– ½	...	-1.7
153	105	SigmaRoc◆	128	+ 4	...	17.6
113	86¼	Sirius Real Estate	92½	+ ¾	5.9	7.1
140	106	Smart (J)	117	+ 2	2.8	9.0
26	16	Steppe Cement◆	24	– ½	...	21.5
116⅞	74½	Taylor Wimpey	77⅞	– ⅛	5.3	27.8
139	104	Town Centre	130½		3.8	...
723½	493⅜	Travis Perkins	587½	+ 15	2.0	-7.1
175	134¼	**Tritax Big Box**	145¾	– 1½	5.7	...
729½	442¼	Unite Group	471⅜	– 4¼	8.0	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	268¼	+ 9⅝	...	6.4
434⅛	312	Workspace Group	360	– 2¼	7.2	...
930	730	Wynnstay Props◆	900	– 5	3.2	12.5
27	12½	Checkit◆	24	– 1	...	-9.2
650⅛	446½	Chemring Group	532	+ 14½	1.5	29.9
55	28½	Chesterfield Spec Cyl◆	36		...	-40.0
1538	881½	Cohort◆‡	1140	+ 16	1.6	21.8
626	206	Dialight	560	– 8	...	...
15	5½	Feedback◆	6⅞		...	-0.3
1270	463½	Gooch & Housego◆	1205		1.1	88.0
28500	10050	Goodwin	15100	+ 400	2.2	20.4
4902	3251½	**Halma**	3634	+ 46	0.7	36.9
3220	1994	Hill & Smith	2840	+ 15	...	27.7
3½	1¼	Image Scan◆	3¼		...	-15.7
3166	2224	**IMI**‡	3036	+ 38	1.2	24.4
6700	3480	Judges Sci.◆	3950	– 50	2.9	47.8
92	34	LPA◆	84	+ 6½	...	-31.8
685	409½	**Melrose**‡	476	+ 2⅛	1.6	16.4
261	179½	Morgan Advanced	243½	+ 4	5.0	32.5
405	200	Mpac◆	355	+ 7½	...	-11.2
1800	1120	MS Intl◆‡	1580	– 10	1.6	23.4
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments	2760	+ 40	0.9	32.6
2413⅜	1779½	Phillips Elec	1834⅞	– 2½	4.0	-42.8
4⅛	1	PipeHawk◆	1⅞		...	-2.7
5490	3110	Renishaw	5130	+ 148	1.5	44.5
1586	990	**Rolls-Royce**‡	1454⅛	+ 24⅛	0.8	21.0
489⅛	286½	Rotork‡	484⅛		1.7	35.1
104	60	SDI Group◆	90		...	19.1
318½	161	Senior	294½		0.7	-28.7
2054⅝	2018½	SKF Group	2044⅜		2.9	31.1
2754½	2088	**Smiths**	2547	+ 24	1.8	29.7
215	135	Solid State◆	188½	– 3½	1.5	26.2
268	170	Somero Enter◆	250	– 2	3.3	17.8
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	6855	+ 20	2.5	30.9
7½	3½	Tanfield◆	4½		...	-4.4
320	240	Thorpe FW◆	258	+ 13	2.8	11.9
142½	44¼	Transense Tech◆	45½	+ ⅛	...	4.9
507½	350	Vesuvius‡	369⅝	– ⅝	6.4	17.5
710	325	Volex‡	615	+ 10	0.8	23.6
3580	2254	**Weir**	2722	+ 36	1.5	28.4
2060	843	XP Power	1896	+ 96	...	-45.1

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2651	+ 19	3.2	4.9
399½	325	3i Infrastructure	388	+ 2	3.5	12.1
1786	1408¼	Aberforth Smlr	1724	+ 4	2.8	26.9
1394	1178	**Alliance Witan**‡	1353	+ 9	2.2	73.1
405	321	Artemis UK Future Lead	383½	– 3	4.0	31.0
190	116⅜	Athelney Trust‡	165		6.1	14.5
273	235½	AVI Global	261	+ 1	1.7	51.5
194	154½	AVI Japan	173	+ 2½	1.3	58.8
331	284	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	294	– ½	0.9	98.7
133	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	122	+ ½	0.6	...
1092	811¼	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1080	+ 4	0.9	...
176	123	Baillie Gifford SN	169⅜	– ¼	0.4	...
231	180½	Baillie Gifford UK Gr‡	213	+ 1	2.9	34.2
154¾	124⅛	Bankers Invstmt Tst	150⅜	+ 1⅜	1.9	66.9
445	388½	BH Macro GBP	425½	+ 1	...	20.1
1786	912	Biotech Growth	1622	– 6	...	-353.7
289½	204	BlckRck Amer Inc‡	281	+ 5	5.3	99.3
205	125½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	184	– 4	3.4	52.6
208	164½	BlckRck Fro Inv	194		3.9	25.9
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	588	+ 5	1.2	85.3
240	200	BlckRck Inc&Grth	234	+ 3	3.3	32.4
288⅜	230½	BlckRck Smlr	261½		3.0	29.9
1076	596	BlckRck Wld Min	999	+ 3	2.4	41.5
1665	1280	Brown Adv US Sm	1575	+ 25	...	-262.9
1588	1336	Brunner‡	1534	+ 2	1.8	55.1
402	312	Caledonia Inv	386	+ 1	2.0	50.1
599	494½	City of Lon IT	572	+ 3	3.9	26.5
155⅞	80	Crystal Amber Fd	85	+ 2½	+61.6	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord	470	+ 1	6.0	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc‡	345½	– 1	3.9	28.5
120	92	CT UK HIT B	109	+ 1	5.5	22.5
126	97	CT UK HIT	116		5.1	23.9
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent◊	475		...	...
867	737½	Edinburgh IT	826	+ 3	3.9	31.1
294½	192½	Edin Wwide	259½	– ½	...	-233.8
1332	325½	**F&C Inv Trust**	341¾	+ 3¼	1.2	76.1
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	630	+ 4	3.3	28.0
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	247½	– ½	3.6	26.8
1574	895	FdltyEmrgMkt	1510	+ 24	1.3	65.9
447½	367½	Fidelity European Trust	426	+ 1	2.4	37.7
479½	377	Fidlty Spec Val	461½	+ 3½	2.2	37.6
875¼	706½	Fins Gwth & Inc	777	– 6	2.6	41.1
85⅝	69¾	GCP Infrastructure	84⅜	+ ½	8.3	39.3
370	316	Global Opps Tst	337½	– ½	3.1	43.3
113	108½	Golden Prospect	111		-16.6	...
69	57⅜	Greencoat Renew‡	67¼	+ ¾	-16.7	...
117	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind	110⅜	+ ⅞	9.7	-12.7
346	250	Hansa Investment Co	330	+ 2	1.3	75.0
335	244	Hansa Inv Co A	332½	– ½	1.3	75.6
3500	2762½	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3285	– 15	...	-55.6
214	173½	Hend High Inc‡	204		5.5	18.1
998	769	Hend Smlr	950	+ 10	3.1	36.4
3290⅝	2285	Herald Inv Trust	2885	+ 30	...	...
512	318½	HgCapital Trust	410	– ½	1.2	...
141	107½	HICL Infra‡	133⅝	+ 1⅝	6.4	9.7
1611½	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr	1408	– 2	3.0	-396.6
494½	379	Impax Env Mkts	446	+ 6	1.1	90.3
519	384	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	502	+ 5	3.8	51.1
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc	169½	– 2	7.2	13.0
427	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc	400	– 3	4.0	79.8
1258	1041	JPM American‡	1206	+ 14	1.0	...
652	416½	JPM Asia Gro & Inc	588	+ 4	5.3	...
313	255½	JPM China	257	– 2½	5.3	66.1
986	800	JPM Claverhs	940	+ 4	3.9	27.9
310	181½	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	239	+ ½	0.3	...
181¼	123½	JPM Em Mkts	168¾	+ 1⅜	4.5	73.4
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	627	+ 3	2.6	34.5
221	149½	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc‡	212	+ 2	2.8	37.3
641	529½	JPM GG&I‡	599	+ 4½	4.1	72.4
1098	799	JPM India	856	+ 6	5.2	...
867	668	JPM Japan	802	+ 3	1.1	79.0
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	421	– 2	0.8	...
1290	991	Law Debenture	1216	+ 4	3.0	32.6
191½	146¼	Lowland Inv	184	+ ½	3.7	27.3
139½	139⅛	Manvyn Val Inv	140		15.5	...
290½	234½	Mercantile IT	272½	+ 1½	3.0	29.5
691	536	Merchants Trust	659	+ 4	4.5	21.6
806	682	Mid Wynd	774	+ 2	1.1	...
1664	1366	Monks Inv Trust‡	1608	+ 10	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml	176		0.9	90.7
1036	854½	Murray Income Trust	972	+ 6	4.2	23.9
376	296½	Murray Intl	365	+ 2	3.5	26.3
437	349	Pacific Assets Trust‡	419		...	74.8
409	330½	Pantheon Intl	387	– ½	...	...
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**‡	3790	+ 34	1.4	3.6
558	515	Personal Assets‡	543	+ 1	1.0	90.0
743½	413½	**Polar CapTech**	653½	+ 6	...	-778.0
80½	63¼	Renewables Infra‡	76½	+ ¾	9.9	-14.2
2645	1956	RIT Cap Ptnr	2545	+ 50	1.8	...
990⅝	490	Riverstone	583	+ 10	...	-363.5
738	506	Schroder TotRt	704	– 1	1.6	71.8
892	629	Schrd Asia Pac	841	+ 5	1.5	63.7
380	314	Schrod Inc Gwth	366		4.0	29.2
401	276	Schrod Jap Gwth	384	+ 5	3.2	55.6
790	652	Schrod UKMid	750		3.0	30.0
18	12¼	Schroder UK PP Tr	17¼	– ¼	...	-71.7
572	480½	Scot American‡	549	+ 3	3.0	35.1
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1478	+ 4½	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco	85½	+ ⅛	8.1	12.5
252	215½	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	222		3.8	34.2
352	207½	Temp Emg Mkt	327	+ 2½	1.6	60.7
429½	344½	Temple Bar‡	412½	+ 4½	3.8	29.9
198½	162½	The Glbl Smaller‡	189		1.7	64.1
9	0⅝	Potentially AI	5⅜		-1.5	...
364½	282½	TR Property	290		5.6	18.3
206	206	UIL‡	207		20.4	...
302	243	Utilico Emerging Mkt‡	282	+ 2	3.4	20.8
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	726	– 7	...	4.7
401½	320	Ww Health	371	– 1½	0.6	...
6347½	4333¼	Sun Life Canada‡	5852⅝	– 40⅜	3.5	...
6¾	2¼	Tavistock Invs◆	3		3.4	2.5
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp‡	5185	+ 135	5.0	7.2
1¾	0⅛	Tern◆	0⅞		...	-1.1
60	40⅜	Time Finance◆	57¾		...	9.1
0⅝	0⅛	Tooru◆	0⅛		...	-1.6
4	1½	Truetide◆	3¼		...	-5.8
132	72¼	Vanquis Banking Gp	78⅞	+ 1½	...	24.7
2800	2000	Volvere◆	2160		...	11.4
7239¾	5453⅜	Wells Fargo	6692½	+ 80½	2.2	...
2275⅜	1755⅜	Westpac Bkg Corp	1814¾	+ 20⅝	4.5	17.0
31¾	23	Worsley Investors	28¼		...	...
57550	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	53324¼	+ 6¼	5.1	18.4

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
357	181	Alumasc◆	235		4.7	9.1
6⅝	4⅝	Aseana Properties	5⅛		...	1.3
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics◆	2		...	-195.0
973	614½	Balfour Beatty	859½	+ 19½	1.7	16.3
410¼	235⅛	**Barratt Redrow**	285½	– ⅜	6.0	21.0
2890	1715	Bellway	1981	– 4	3.6	14.9
4442	2796	Berkeley	3284	– 10	...	9.9
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	821½	+ 14	5.7	...
8884⅜	8799	Kingspan Group‡	8805½		0.5	27.7
726	525	**Land Securities**	630½	+ ½	6.5	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop**‡	178	+ ¼	7.1	...
18⅞	4¼	Macau Prop Opp Fd	5¼		...	-0.3
184¼	124	Marshalls	152¼	+ 1¼	4.6	26.7
100	66	Michelmersh Brick◆	73½	+ ½	6.3	18.3
1	0⅛	Mindflair◆	0⅜		...	-1.2
5730	3938	Morgan Sindall	4034	+ 76	4.0	10.8
10200	8350	Mountview Estates	8700	– 50	6.0	16.7
85	65¼	NewRiver REIT	76⅝	+ ⅝	8.7	...
226	160	Palace Capital	188½	– ½	8.0	41.9
320	261	Panther Securities◆	290		4.1	11.8
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1107	+ 5½	5.4	12.4
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props	91¾	– ⅝	8.0	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv◆	31½		4.8	-63.0
849½	538	Safestore	540½	– 2	5.7	...
1142	791½	Savills‡	1020	+ 10	2.3	19.6
4½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv◆	0½		...	-0.1
997⅜	608	**Segro**‡	933⅜	+ ⅜	3.4	...
155⅞	124½	Shaftesbury Capital‡	138¼	+ ⅜	3.1	7.4

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
229	120	AEP Plantations	194	– 2⅜	3.1	11.3
30	17⅛	Airea◆	27		3.7	10.6
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	1843½	– 16½	3.4	13.0
715⅝	581	Barr (AG)	590	– 2	3.2	14.0
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**	4100	+ 8	6.0	11.7
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1018	– 11½	...	...
171⅜	85½	C&C Group	101¼	+ 12	4.9	...
5⅞	3¼	Capital Metals◆	3⅞		...	-20.6
460	271	Churchill China◆	370	+ 2½	5.7	9.3
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	4494	– 2	2.3	20.2
1515⅛	822½	Colefax◆‡	1375		0.5	9.8
5810	4775	Cranswick	5020	– 40	2.2	17.0
1938	1295½	**Diageo**	1603	+ ½	2.3	27.8
0⅛	0	Distil◆	0		...	-0.6
1932½	1160	Evans (M.P.)◆	1886	– 28	3.2	11.7
149½	114½	Fevara	137½	– 2½	1.7	6.0
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**‡	17650	+ 320	3.3	28.3
2185⅛	1147⅞	Glanbia‡	1888⅝	+ 31⅞	2.0	34.9
307½	191½	Greencore	248⅝	+ ¾	1.0	18.8
67¾	4¾	Headlam‡	10½		...	-0.1
738	447⅞	Hilton Food	666½	– 1	5.3	7.6
3632	2437	**Imperial Brands**‡	2490	+ 2	6.7	9.9
7646⅜	5567¼	Kerry Group	7296¾	+ 76¼	1.7	21.2
214⅛	106¼	McBride	186¼	– ¾	1.6	9.5
290	85	Mulberry Group◆	280		...	-21.5
1240	880	Nichols◆‡	1100	– 35	3.5	18.7
374	252	Norcros	295	– 5	3.8	...
387	309	Origin Ents◆	382½		3.9	9.0
1	0¼	PACSCo◆	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47⅜	Portmeirion◆	52		...	-1.1
1½	0½	Provexis◆	1		...	-52.5
114	65½	PZ Cussons‡	95½	+ 1¼	3.9	20.3
138	92	REA	118	+ 8	...	-228.1
210	155	Tandem◆	182½	+ 2½	1.6	11.8
320	220	The Character Grp◆	315		2.2	-46.7
82⅝	5	Ukrproduct Grp◆	8		...	-18.6
5542⅜	3644	**Unilever**‡	4551½	– 7½	3.6	12.2
76½	19½	Victoria◆	57	+ 2	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2180	1458	Avon Technologies	1710	– 8	1.1	66.3
1527	902½	**Babcock**‡	965¾	– 4¼	0.8	22.9
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	1898	– 25½	2.0	27.6
1500	500	Braime A N/V◆	1250		1.3	6.6
2490	1376	Braime Group◆	2400		0.7	12.7
550	350	Caffyns	500		2.0	-12.3
0⅝	0⅛	Cap XX Ld◆	0⅛		...	-3.4
340	202¼	Castings	297	– 6	6.2	17.1

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical◆	280½		1.0	60.7
12⅜	4½	Allergy Therapeutics◆	4⅝		...	-5.7
4⅛	0⅞	CellExHealth◆	1⅜		...	-0.2
580	391½	Anpario◆	460	– 12½	2.8	11.4
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**	11708	– 50	2.0	24.0
3⅛	1½	Cambridge Nutri Sci◆	1⅜		...	-0.6
259¼	193	**Convatec**‡	215¼	– 2	2.6	34.0
34	20	Potter & Moore◆‡	22		2.5	7.2
116⅜	73	Eco Animal Health◆	96	– 7	...	29.4
31⅛	21⅛	EKF Diagnostics◆	25½	– ⅛	...	54.3
10	0⅛	Futura Medical◆	0¼		...	-0.1
3220	1943	Genus	2162	+ 2	1.6	5.0
2282	1455	**GSK**‡	1770½	– 5	4.0	12.5
0⅛	0⅛	Gunsynd◆	0⅛		...	-2.1
416½	274½	**Haleon**‡	333¼	– 2⅜	2.2	17.9
1865	1187	Hikma Pharma‡	1531	+ 33	4.2	11.4
266	150½	Hutchmed China◆	192	– 8	...	4.9
19⅜	3¼	ImmuPharma◆	3¾	+ ⅛	...	-9.7
32	12¼	Inspiration Health◆	19½	+ ½	...	-16.8
15	6½	IXICO◆	7½		...	-4.1

Listen for free now
DAB RADIO
FREE APP
'PLAY TIMES RADIO'
TIMESRadio

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1	0⅛	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0½		...	-3.3
76	53⅜	NIOX Group♦	66	+ 1	2.3	39.1
132.68	96.03	Novartis	112.04	- 0.10	3.3	36.8
962	420	Oxford Biomedica	443½	- 3	...	-16.5
0¾	0⅛	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-3.1
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1⅜		...	-1.3
6522¼	3664	**Reckitt Benck**‡	5000	- 58	4.3	10.7
29⅞	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	28	+ 1	...	-120.2
40	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	32		...	-13.3
1429¾	1008½	**Smith & Neph**	1008½	- 17	2.9	18.9
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	246	- ½	0.6	60.0
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	7		...	2.0
0¾	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	70⅜	+ 1⅜	...	30.7
4780½	3665⅜	BASF	4457	- 110¼	4.3	28.5
4606¾	2268½	Bayer	4117½	- 76	0.2	-13.0
98⅛	73⅛	Coats Group	77⅜	- ⅞	3.2	17.7
3520¼	2478	**Croda**‡	3177	- 27	3.5	71.6
600	250	Cropper (James)♦	590	+ 60	...	19.2
195⅛	136	Elementis‡	171⅝	- 1⅜	1.9	-29.8
110	6⅛	Hardide♦	87½	+ 5½	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper‡	2540	- 5	5.4	-6.4
3245¼	2218	Johnson Matthey	2236	- 12	4.6	-29.3
1058	660	Mondi‡	825¼	- ¼	1.5	25.7
147½	110	Robinson♦	127		4.7	9.3
1022	597	Swire Pacific‡	979½	- 26¼	3.8	47.9
10⅜	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	7¼		...	-6.7
124	16¾	Synthomer	105¼	- ¼	...	-1.1
2858¼	2026⅝	Takeda Pharma	2728¼	+ 11¼	3.6	-58.6
1024	515	Victrex	969	- 29	6.1	30.3
430	320	Wynnstay♦	362½	+ 2½	5.0	36.7
479¼	318½	Zotefoams‡	448	+ 3	1.8	9.7

Leisure

451	231	Accesso Tech♦	309	- 1	...	15.0
260	160	Celtic♦	182½		...	5.1
221¾	164	Domino's Pizza‡	206¼	- ⅜	5.5	13.7
915¾	491¾	**Entain**‡	502¼	- ¾	4.0	-4.8
60¼	19¾	Evoke	42½	- ⅜	...	-0.3
50	29	Gaming Realms♦	30¼	- ¼	...	14.9
310	210	Heavitree♦	305		2.2	5.6
244	130	Heavitree A♦	202½		3.3	3.7
13305	8618	**InterCont'l Hotels**‡	11345¼	+ 83	1.2	31.3
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	267½	- 4	...	9.0
271	129⅜	On The Beach	174	- 1	2.3	31.6
143	82⅞	Rank Group	87⅛	+ 1⅛	4.0	13.6
219¾	137¼	SSP	184¼	- 2¼	2.4	-19.9
0½	0¼	Bow Street Group♦	0⅝		...	-0.3
865	530½	Wetherspoon JD	782½	- 3	1.5	13.0
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2347	- 1	4.1	19.0

Media

76⅛	51⅛	Aeorema Comms♦	64½		4.1	51.2
29	18	Altitude Group♦	22		...	-88.0
115	70¼	Arcontech Group♦	81		4.9	11.5
828¼	418⅝	**Autotrader**‡	489⅜	+ 4⅜	2.4	14.3
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub	621	- 1	2.6	18.8
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1⅜	- ⅛	...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai♦	0¼		...	-2.5
19½	9	Ebiquity♦	9⅞		...	-1.0
750	262¼	Future	292	+ 1¾	5.8	4.7
154	60⅛	GlobalData	71⅛	+ 2	2.1	16.3
110	44	IG Design Group♦‡	85½	- ½	1.2	-0.7
1000	719	**Informa**‡	889⅜	+ 15	2.5	...
87⅜	65⅛	ITV	70½	+ 1½	7.1	11.9
200	98½	ME Group	122⅝	+ 2½	6.8	8.2
0¼	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	14.2
27	12	Mission Group♦	23		...	-1.1
220¼	139⅛	Mony Group	192	+ 3	6.6	12.5
2341¾	1624⅛	News Corp A‡	2177¾	+ 14¾	0.7	...
2615¼	1891½	News Corp B‡	2425	+ 14¼	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦	320	+ 7½	4.8	-10.7
59	40	React♦	41		...	-28.3
3575	1991	**Relx**	2475	- 19	2.8	22.0
732⅝	391⅜	Rightmove	477½	+ 13½	2.3	17.0
270	130	SpaceandPeople♦	135		...	6.2
124½	95⅛	STV Group	101	- 1½	...	-9.4
444	170½	System1 Group♦	336	- 2	1.8	32.3
4847⅜	4705½	21st Cent Fox A‡	4733½		0.9	...
3365¼	3313⅜	21st Cent Fox B‡	3365½		1.3	...
369	230	Wilmington	273	+ 13	4.2	21.2
412⅝	218½	WPP	367¼	- 2¼	4.1	7.3
68½	40	Zinc Media♦	57½		...	-5.6

Natural Resources

0½	0	ADM Energy#	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8½	H-Power♦	10¼		...	-4.3
89⅜	36¼	Afentra♦	82⅜	+ ¼	...	-79.6
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-0.9
0¼	0⅛	Allen Metals♦	0⅛		...	-15.0
2⅞	0⅞	Aminex	2		...	-23.0
8924	4045⅝	Anglo Amer Plat	6570¾	- 85¼	7.0	24.4
4348	2487	**Anglo Amer**‡	3990	+ 18	0.7	-16.3
435	173⅛	Anglo Asian Mng♦	416	+ 1	0.7	36.3
4475	2183¾	**Antofagasta**‡	3790	+ 19	1.5	38.0
1¼	0⅛	Arc Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-1.4
2¾	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1⅝	+ ⅛	...	-160.5
0⅞	0¼	Arkle Resources♦	0⅝		...	-9.5
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources♦	2⅛		...	-17.8
1133	522	Atalaya Mine‡	975	- 13½	1.1	18.7
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3¼		...	-0.8
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	7½	- 3½	...	-2.2
0¼	0	Bezant Resources♦	0⅛		...	13.7
3592	1918	BHP Group‡	3231	- 20	4.0	22.6
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	10½	+ ⅜	...	-88.4
122½	7⅜	Bougainville	8½		...	-12.8
609¾	399⅛	**BP**‡	564¾	- ½	4.4	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.7
8¼	2¼	Cadence Minerals♦	5⅛		...	-9.7
5½	3	Cadogan Energy	4		...	-12.0
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦	1880	- 15	2.2	9.0
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	169⅜	- 1¾	9.1	-5.4
3¼	1⅜	Chariot Ltd♦	2⅛	- ⅛	...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-5.8
0½	0⅛	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.4
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	11¼		...	-2.2
300½	145⅝	DRD Gold‡	200⅝	+ 4¾	3.9	16.8
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-2.7
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0⅛		...	-2.0
5620	2658	**Endeavour**‡	4593	+ 87	2.9	22.2
28	9⅛	EnQuest	27	- ½	3.0	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2¼		...	14.7
2⅜	0⅛	Europa Oil & Gas♦	1⅜		...	-9.1
87¼	25¼	Ferrexpo	28¼	+ 2¼	...	-1.0
4472	2000	**Fresnillo**‡	3014	+ 55	3.7	21.7
80	3½	Galantas Gold♦	30½	- 1	...	-8.3
21½	2⅜	GCM Resources♦	12⅜	+ ½	...	-17.7
12¾	2½	Gem Diamonds	12¼	+ ⅝	...	-0.2
3½	1⅜	Getech♦	3	- ⅛	...	-7.1
707¼	293⅛	**Glencore**‡	6051½	+ 5¼	2.1	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration#	0⅛		...	-4.3
4582¾	2310⅛	Gold Fields‡	3350⅜	+ 10⅜	4.8	...
21	7½	Goldplat♦‡	17	+ ¼	3.9	28.3
2	0⅛	Goldstone Res♦	0½		...	-0.7
800	290	Greatland Resources♦	582	+ ½	...	8.5
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	275	- 19	...	30.8
235	160⅝	Gulf Keystone‡	194	+ 1¼	3.9	37.7
858	292½	Hochschild‡	612	- 1	1.1	21.2
553	300	Hunting	400	+ 3½	2.5	20.7
0⅛	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.5
219¾	57⅞	ITM Power♦	103	+ ⅞	...	-13.9
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2⅜	- ⅛	...	-3.2
1⅛	0⅛	Karel Diamond Res♦	0¼		...	-4.7
2⅜	0⅛	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	0⅝		...	-6.1
325½	178⅛	Kenmare Res	179¼	- 7⅛	...	-0.7
5⅞	1⅛	Landore Res♦	2¼		...	-2.2
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.3
4⅜	2½	Lexington Gold♦	2¾		...	-28.1
19¼	10⅛	Metals Exploration♦	16	- ¼	...	20.7
0⅛	0⅛	Nativo Resources♦	0¼		...	-0.1
4½	0½	Nostrum Oil & Gas	0⅝		...	-0.0
0½	0⅛	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-15.8
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	13⅝	Orosur Mining♦	14	- ½	...	...
190⅜	74⅛	Pan African Res	123⅞	- 2¼	1.8	23.3
31	6½	Pantheon Res♦	10¾	+ ½	...	-38.1
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	23		...	3.4
21⅞	5	Petra Diamonds	6¾	- ¼	...	-0.2
1¾	0½	Petrel Resources♦	1		...	-4.4
1⅜	0⅛	Petro Matad♦	1		...	-4.6
8½	2½	Plexus Holdings♦	3⅝	- ⅛	...	-1.4
938	678⅞	Porvair	852	- 4	0.8	21.7
7¼	2½	Prospex Energy♦	6⅞		...	-10.2
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	1		...	-6.0
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	64½		...	-18.2
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5564⅜	Rio Tinto Ltd‡	8922¾	- 322¼	3.9	17.0
9117	4554½	**Rio Tinto**‡	7374	+ 9	4.7	16.3
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0¼		...	-11.0
375	195	Serabi Gold♦	285	+ 2½	1.8	5.4
302⅞	151⅛	Serica Energy♦	275¾	- 4¾	5.8	-28.7
3758½	2553½	**Shell**‡	3551	+ 18	3.2	15.9
7	2½	Shuka Minerals♦	3¼	+ ⅛	...	-2.4
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1¾		...	-1.5
27	5½	Star Energy♦	22½	+ 1½	...	-4.0
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy#	2¾		...	-2.8
0	0	Sunrise Resources#	0		...	-3.3
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.5
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-6.5
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½	- ⅛	...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6762	+ 24½	4.4	13.3
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
23½	3½	Tullow Oil	23		...	77.8
0	0	UK Energy Group♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2½	URU Metals♦	4	- ¼	...	-2.7
9½	2⅜	Vast Resources♦	4⅛	- ⅛	...	-0.8
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3	- ¼	...	-7.8
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1		...	-4.5
4⅛	2½	Zephyr Energy♦	3		...	-7.0

Professional & Support Services

5135	2980	4imprint‡	4352	+ 46	4.1	14.6
615	464	Andrews Sykes♦	550		4.7	12.7
130	103⅜	BTG Consulting♦	106	- 1½	4.3	20.0
2898	1981	**Bunzl**	2566	- 6	2.9	18.2
416	215	Capita	249	+ 10	...	-1.7
49⅜	25	CEPS♦	40½		...	-11.5
193	90	Christie Group♦	182½	- 5	1.9	35.9
2581½	2000	**Compass**	2280¼	- 8½	2.2	28.0
87	64½	Croma Security♦	72½		3.3	12.7
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6330		3.4	...
38¼	15	Diales Grp♦	36½		4.1	28.1
7765	4970	**Diploma**	7115	+ 90	0.9	51.6
840	505	DiscoverIE	790	+ 13	1.6	26.2
115¼	78½	Essentra	107⅜	- ⅜	2.0	...
3915	2203	**Experian**	2782	+ 3	1.9	22.9
330	110	FIH Group♦	157½	- 5	4.3	3.5
870	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	854	+ 4	4.7	9.2
5860	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5850		2.8	26.8
250½	163½	Int'l Workplace‡	181¼	+ 2¾	0.6	...
172½	123⅞	Johnson Service	133	- 1½	3.8	14.3
560	360	Journeo♦	536		...	22.1
263⅛	181¼	Kier Group	246¾	+ 4¾	3.2	19.3
1170	910	Latham (J)♦	1055	- 5	3.5	11.4
3800	2100	London Security♦	3650		2.7	18.8
298	204	LSL Property Servs	255		4.5	15.4
97¼	59½	Macfarlane‡	78¾	+ 1¼	4.6	19.7
175	64½	Maintel Holdings♦	67½		...	-5.7
28	15¼	Malvern Int'l♦	21½		...	-2.8
460	310	Mears Group‡	397	+ 1½	4.6	7.1
260	101½	Michael Page‡	211½	- 2¾	2.2	73.0
214	134½	Mitie Group	209	+ ¼	2.2	31.7
15¼	0½	MobilityOne#	6¾		...	-2.1
137	80½	Newmark Security♦	108½		...	15.4
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	212		...	6.6
158	90	Northern Bear♦‡	120½		6.2	4.0
187½	110	NWF Group♦	156½	+ 1½	5.6	8.4
70	42	PCI-PAL♦	65½		...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	9½	- ¼	...	-14.2
12⅞	6⅜	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0⅝	0½	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-2.8
62½	41⅜	Record	44½	+ 1¼	8.1	11.4
990	772	Renew Holdings♦	886	+ 23	2.3	14.4
507	326¼	**Rentokil**‡	327½	- 3½	2.9	23.8
310	222	Restore♦	300	+ 12½	2.4	-63.8
6½	1½	River Global A♦	1¾	- ¼	...	-0.2
30	14	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
768½	536⅛	RS Group	735½	+ 9½	3.1	21.3
150	85	RTC Group♦‡	92½		7.3	6.6
127⅛	68	RWS Holdings♦	122½	+ 1⅛	5.2	-4.5
612	520	Science Group♦	576		1.7	7.7
325¼	212½	Serco‡	248½	- ⅜	1.9	17.3
79⅜	55⅛	Smiths News	67⅜	- ⅜	8.2	5.8
26	13¼	Software Circle♦	19¾	+ 1¼	...	-94.0
52½	36⅛	Staffline Group♦	39		...	10.0
324	132¼	SThree	288	- 6½	5.0	21.0
350	146	Synectics♦‡	187½		2.7	8.5
3⅜	0½	Thruvision Group♦	2¾	+ ⅛	...	-2.7
74	46	Tribal♦	67	+ 4	...	16.0
78⅜	58	Vianet♦	66		3.6	46.2
490	294½	ZIGUP‡	419½	+ 8	6.4	12.4

Retailing

117⅞	82½	AO World	89½	+ 1	...	14.1
269½	140	B&M European	224⅜	+ 1⅜	4.3	13.8
115¼	58¼	Card Factory	68	+ 1¾	7.4	7.6
1648	1062	CVS Group	1295	+ 5	0.7	17.6
204	113	DFS Furniture	134	- 4	0.7	12.8
1174	707	Dunelm	750	+ ½	9.4	9.7
845	598	Frasers Group	792½	+ 1½	...	9.1
2046	1407¼	Greggs‡	1731	- 21	4.0	14.4
276½	123¾	Halfords‡	248½	- 2½	3.6	16.3
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	743½	+ 10½	3.0	15.1
895	640½	Inchcape‡	811	+ 2	4.1	11.2
1⅜	0⅜	Imaging Biometrics	0⅝		...	-4.1
106⅛	64	**JD Sports**	78½	- 1	1.5	9.0
372½	240¼	**Kingfisher**	288½	+ ⅛	4.3	20.6
418⅜	301⅜	**Marks & Spencer**	379	+ 1⅜	1.1	29.8
3½	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0⅞		...	-0.9
84⅛	61¼	Naked Wines♦	64⅜	- 2	...	-7.0
15900	11200	**Next**	14685	- 230	1.8	19.3
316⅛	140¼	Ocado	203⅜	+ 2	...	4.3
233	167¼	Pets at Home	208½	+ 3	3.5	15.1
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	451		...	94.0
747	193	Saga	606	+ 11	...	...
380½	293¾	**Sainsbury's**	332½	- 1⅞	4.1	19.2
712	369	WH Smith	1741¼	+ 15¾	...	-3.4
14	4½	Sosandar♦	13¾		...	98.2
510⅜	411¾	**Tesco**	465½	- 1¾	3.1	16.9
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	33		9.4	10.8

Technology

246	140⅝	Alfa Financial	155½	+ ¼	6.2	15.3
307	195	Aptitude Software	219	+ 3½	2.5	30.0
129	55	Bango♦	62½	- 3½	...	-8.6
20	11	BATM Adv Coms	11½		...	-3.7
33	19⅜	Berkeley Res	27	+ 1½	...	-26.1
3½	0⅜	Blackbird♦	1⅜		...	-1.9
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦	91	+ ½	3.7	-101.8
27½	11	Cirata♦	12½	+ ½	...	-2.9
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0⅛		...	0.4
6045	2242	**Computacenter**	5220	+ 90	1.5	35.6
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	260		0.4	44.4
13½	6½	Corero♦	11¾	+ 1⅜	...	-157.3
2644	988	Craneware♦	1320	+ 20	2.5	31.8
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	90		...	21.4
10¼	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	10⅛		...	-8.6
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	14	+ ½	...	-9.6
0½	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165¾	94½	FDM Group	103¼	+ 3¾	6.8	19.8
480	114	Filtronic♦	245		...	...
265	147⅜	GB Group	152	+ 2¼	2.9	-5.0
51	23	Ilika♦	24¼	- ¼	...	-6.0
138	56	Ingenta♦	70½		6.4	5.9
178	73	Intercede♦	116½		...	20.4
28½	11¾	Iomart♦	13⅜	+ ⅛	...	-1.7
72⅞	4¾	IQE♦	44½	- 1⅛	...	-11.8
4453½	912⅜	LG Electronics	2025½	- ⅜	1.3	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	63		3.2	14.5
11⅜	2	Nanoco Group	2½	+ ⅛	...	-2.2
138	94⅛	Netcall♦	118½		0.8	48.4
36	22	Northamber♦	25		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	36⅝	Oxford Metrics♦	38¼	+ ¾	8.4	-70.5
31	17	Pennant Int'l♦	29½		...	-5.9
447	210	Playtech	404	+ 2	...	1.0
50	18	Pulsar Group♦	18½	- 2	...	-2.4
576½	398½	QinetiQ	472⅜	- ⅜	2.3	23.5
117	88	RM	101	- ½	...	38.8
6½	2⅜	Seeing Machines♦	4¼	- ⅛	...	-10.1
66	35½	Shearwater Group♦	56		...	-1.4
2134	1083	Softcat	1857	+ 19	1.6	27.9
39½	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	575½	Tele Ericsson	751½	+ 8½	3.0	11.5
1181	771⅜	**The Sage Grp**	958	- 21⅜	2.3	25.4
89½	52½	Touchstar♦	72½		4.5	-5.5
435	280	Tracsis♦	365	+ 15	0.7	...
430	236	Triad Group	395		2.3	39.8
360	210	Water Intel♦	335	- 10	...	15.8
150	96⅜	Xaar	135	+ ½	...	-31.4
19	8½	Zoo Digital♦	17¼	- ¼	...	-6.1

Telecoms

436¼	219	**Airtel Africa**	345	+ 2	1.5	25.1
242⅜	173	**BT Group**	201½	+ 1½	4.1	18.3
169½	116¾	Currys‡	147¾	- ⅜	2.0	9.5
1207	687	Gamma Comms	1140	- 34	...	16.4
247⅜	137	Helios Towers‡	198¾	+ 3¼	0.9	72.7
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-2.6
1914	638	Telecom Plus	795	+ 8	6.3	7.9
131⅛	83⅜	**Vodafone**	128¼	+ ⅛	3.1	-90.9

Transport

260	203⅜	Braemar	230	+ 3	3.0	31.8
5485	3365	Clarkson‡	4942	- 36	2.3	23.1
683¾	332⅜	EasyJet	667¼	- 1⅜	2.0	10.1
225¼	152⅛	FirstGroup	169¼	+ 1⅛	4.3	7.9
554	344	Fisher (James)	428	- 2	...	-49.2
492⅜	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	419¼	+ 7⅞	1.6	6.9
699⅛	458	Irish Cont	670	- 2½	...	16.7
32⅞	17	Mobico Group	25⅜	+ ¼	...	-1.1
7	1½	Sutton Harbour♦	2¾		...	-0.2
1453	832	Wizz Air	1016	- 5	...	...

Utilities

220¼	146¾	**Centrica**‡	150⅞		3.8	-100.6
937½	652	Drax Group	812½	+ 5½	3.7	39.3
485	420	Jersey Electricity	440		5.0	12.3
1428½	1026	**National Grid**	1130½	+ 2	4.3	17.3
606	443	Pennon	449⅜	+ 2¼	6.5	23.2
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	2930	+ 18	4.3	23.7
2767½	1631	**SSE**‡	2362	- 2	2.9	22.4
1497	1099	**United Utilities**	1324	+ 2	4.1	15.4

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; ☆ figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Data provided by ICE. Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

ICE

Money Markets

Wall Street

	Sept 11 midday	+/-
3M	164.43	+1.57
Abbott Labs	102.11	-1.25
AbbVie	257.07	+2.07
Accenture	180.25	+2.34
Adobe	250.53	+1.70
Aflac	115.07	+0.60
Agilent Techs	146.48	+3.36
Air Prods & Chm	292.39	-1.26
Allstate	252.75	+0.96
Alphabet Cl A	340.14	+7.54
Alphabet Cl C	337.33	+6.94
Altria	69.19	+0.40
Amazon	255.56	+3.67
Amer Elec Power	123.63	+0.16
Amer Express	324.61	+3.90
Amer Tower	177.69	+4.71
Ameren Corp	105.24	+0.29
American Int	74.80	-0.23
American Wtr W	138.43	-1.41
Ameriprise	553.33	-0.20
Ametek	241.31	+7.07
Amgen	379.77	-2.70
Amphenol	83.83	+3.58
Analog Devices	377.69	+16.44
Aon Corp	306.02	-1.75
Apple	334.19	+7.62
Applied Mats	461.50	+7.49
Archer Daniels	87.72	+0.81
Arthur J Gallagher	242.53	-0.78
AT&T	26.19	+0.64
Auto Data Proc	267.69	+0.36
Autodesk	212.87	+1.26
Autozone	2904.78	+23.31
Baker Hughes	57.62	-1.78
Ball Corp	60.51	+0.77
Bank NY Mellon	162.81	+0.22
Bank of America	62.75	+0.19
Baxter Intl	23.82	-0.35
Becton Dickinsn	175.76	-0.66
Berkshire Hath	507.28	+0.28
Best Buy	90.55	+2.46
BlackRock	1088.65	+26.25
Boeing	209.84	+5.04
Booking Holdings	173.94	-0.39
Boston Sci	42.97	-0.13
Bristol-Myers Sq	63.41	-0.34
Broadcom Ord	364.68	+3.85
Canadian Pacific Kansas	89.58	+0.74
Capital One Fin	207.75	+0.64
Cardinal Health	233.16	-2.87
Caterpillar	821.20	+16.20
Cencora	318.79	-2.16
Centene	65.20	-0.20
Chevron	214.18	+1.42
Church & Dwight	93.51	-0.43
Cigna Group	278.49	-2.42
Cincinnati Fin	169.21	-0.39
Cintas	202.38	+3.94
Cisco Systems	111.47	+4.03
Citigroup	138.36	-0.14
Citizens Financial	69.82	+0.19
Clorox Co	86.77	-2.00
CME	275.20	+1.14
CMS Energy	67.46	-0.22
Coca-Cola	88.30	+0.47
Cognizant Tech	58.78	+0.46
Colgate-Palm	87.62	-0.28
Comcast	25.39	+0.22
Conocophillips	136.95	-0.09
Consd Edison	106.83	+0.10
Constellation Brs	122.91	-0.90
Corning	166.37	+3.25
Costco Whole	904.44	+2.06
Crown Castle Int	75.43	+1.56
CSX	48.95	-0.10
Cummins	555.51	+5.48
CVS Health	94.19	-1.10
Danaher	201.43	+0.90
Deere&co	682.30	+4.36
Delta Air Lines	79.75	+1.51
Devon Energy	49.99	-0.03
Digital Realty Tr.	188.22	+2.85
Dollar General	123.38	+0.39
Dollar Tree	117.01	-1.65
Dominion Energy	65.28	+0.23
Dover	189.55	+2.18
Dow Inc	29.43	-0.21
D.R. Horton	137.41	+1.83
DTE Energy	133.55	-0.79
Duke Energy	119.64	+0.27
Eaton	423.50	+14.35
eBay	107.19	+2.16
Ecolab	275.60	+4.00
Edison Intl	56.55	-0.20
Edwards Life	84.15	-2.62
Eli Lilly	1123.35	+0.35
Emmerson Elec	151.52	+3.15
Entergy	105.56	-0.17
EOG Res	147.28	-0.18
Equifax	167.26	-0.78
Equinix	1042.21	+18.41
Essex Property	273.34	+1.97
Estee Lauder	96.79	+0.32
Evrsurce Engy	68.50	-0.49
Exelon	43.33	-0.07
Extra Space Stor	138.22	+1.77
ExxonMobil Hldgs	166.13	+0.90
Fastenal	49.24	+0.23
Fedex	313.07	+1.27
Fifth Third	54.49	+0.06
First Solar	209.97	+2.81
FirstEnergy	46.08	-0.17
FIS	38.00	-0.52
Ford Motor	14.03	+0.15
Freeport-Mcm	71.35	+0.14
Garmin	280.60	+8.40
GE Aerospace	324.20	+0.05
Gen Dynamics	355.27	+1.02
General Mills	35.92	-0.04
General Mtrs	86.03	-0.09
Genuine Parts	135.53	+1.37
Gilead Sciences	143.97	-0.84
Global Payments	88.93	+0.38
Goldman Sachs	1029.33	+9.56
Grainger (WW)	1293.99	+22.50
Halliburton	35.71	-0.36
Hartford Insurance	136.00	-0.80
HCA Healthcare	425.93	+4.72
Hershey	174.09	-0.25
Home Depot	309.51	+3.82
Honeywell Intl	202.75	+0.56
HP Ent	60.66	+5.44
HP Inc	34.88	+2.15
Humana	407.12	+6.39
Huntington	16.82	+0.09
IBM	238.94	+4.92
ICE Group	157.77	+1.96
IFF	83.65	-0.40
Illinois Tool	268.30	+3.10
Illumina	207.76	+6.49
Ingersoll-Rand	72.72	-0.37
Intel	102.36	+2.04
Intuit	319.02	+6.25
Intuitive Surg	368.95	+8.49
Iron Muntn	114.82	+1.92
Johnsn & Johnsn	266.08	-0.27
Johnson Controls	145.72	+2.91
JP Morgan Chase	356.23	+2.67
Kellanova		
Keurig Dr Pepper	31.36	-0.10
Kimberley-Clark	98.30	-0.18
Kinder Morgan	31.00	+0.04
KLA Corp	181.02	+3.84
Kroger	58.23	+1.28
L3 Harris	245.12	-3.25
Labcorp Hldgs	306.41	-0.55
Lam Research	300.81	+2.80
Lennar	79.96	+2.06
Lockheed Martin	524.60	-5.52
Lowes Co	197.98	+1.39
LyondellBasell	65.41	+1.11
Marathon Petrol	406.37	+13.95
Marriott Intl	336.22	+7.15
Marsh	176.77	-0.52
MartinMarietta	509.19	+6.71
MasterCard	568.81	+3.44
McCormick	51.65	+0.55
McDonald's	252.93	-0.12
McKesson	878.58	-2.28
Medtronic	90.52	-1.10
Merck & Co	145.04	+0.33
Meta Platforms	648.99	+4.61
Metlife	96.72	-0.06
Microchip	74.33	+2.75
Micron	971.27	-6.14
Microsoft	495.34	+2.90
Mondelez	62.48	+0.01
Monster Bvrge	43.23	+0.14
Moodys	471.19	+3.83
Morgan Stanley	213.87	+1.21
Motorala Sols	468.95	+5.07
M&T Bank Corp	239.80	+0.78
Nasdaq Inc	91.40	-0.61
Netapp	195.17	+11.57
Netflix	76.75	+0.74
Newmont Mining	126.08	-0.06
NextEra Energy	82.79	+0.35
Nike	36.88	+0.26
Norfolk Sthn	322.26	-1.04
Northrup Grum	516.97	-1.98
Nucor	256.38	+0.92
Nvidia	219.16	+0.80
Occidental Petr	61.27	+0.11
Omnicom	79.13	-0.32
ONEOK	96.71	
Oracle	151.60	-1.34
O'Reilly	85.99	+0.48
Paccar	123.08	+0.52
Parker-Hannifin	946.33	+11.99
Paychex	115.26	+0.08
Paypal Hldngs	53.84	+0.53
PepsiCo	137.23	+0.58
Pfizer	27.57	-0.08
PG&E	13.89	-0.14
Philip Morris Intl	194.31	+4.54
Phillips66	263.00	+4.49
PNC Finl	243.75	+0.77
PPG Inds	105.90	+0.85
PPL	34.14	-0.07
Price T Rowe	107.03	-0.53
Procter & Gmbl	145.00	+2.03
Progressive Cp	215.65	-0.54
Prologis	135.73	+1.32
Prudential Finl	118.21	-0.27
Public Serv Ent	72.43	-0.05
Public Storage	297.23	+2.63
PulteGroup	117.90	+1.49
Qualcomm	183.65	+6.77
Quanta Services	647.64	+28.91
Realty Income	59.47	-0.10
Regeneron Pharm	782.83	-10.43
Regions Financial	30.00	+0.05
Republic Serv	223.17	+2.09
Rockwell Auto	431.91	+10.54
Roper Tech	387.69	-0.89
Ross Stores	228.14	+2.66
RTX Corp	197.60	-0.52
RylCaribbean	261.81	+2.81
Salesforce Inc	248.91	+5.91
Schwab (Charles)	106.59	-0.74
Seagate Tech	818.42	-43.91
Sempra	83.61	-0.39
Sherwin-Williams	323.67	+6.23
Simon Prop	205.12	+0.45
SLB	55.89	-0.12
Southern Co	87.93	+0.18
S&P Global	408.58	-1.84
Starbucks	99.27	+0.05
State Street	193.77	+2.47
Stryker	271.40	+1.39
Synchrony Fin	75.75	+0.31
Sysco	84.14	+1.83
Target	156.53	+0.80
Texas Insts	271.76	+12.94
TheKraftHeinz	24.54	+0.14
Thermo Fisher	612.46	+9.28
TJX	125.65	-0.77
Tractor Supply Co	33.57	+0.05
Transdigm Group	1137.03	+10.15
Travelers	372.24	+4.68
Truist Finl Corp	50.43	+0.10
Tyson Foods	52.50	+0.04
Union Pacific	284.75	-1.03
UnitedHealth	377.44	-10.84
Untd Rentals	994.52	+5.44
UPS	100.05	+0.08
US Bancorp	62.67	+0.26
Valero Energy	397.91	+12.48
Ventas	90.40	-0.04
Verisk Analyts	175.76	-0.10
Verizon Comm	50.72	+0.75
Vertex Pharma	514.34	-0.22
Visa	370.08	+2.87
Vulcan Mats	253.23	+2.63
Walmart	106.55	+0.82
Walt Disney	106.61	+0.79
Waste Mgt	214.26	-0.51
Waters	408.24	+6.60
WEC Engy	105.66	+0.31
Wells Fargo	90.10	+0.65
Welltower	235.12	-0.59
Western Digital	446.83	-14.10
Weyerhaeuser	22.29	+0.29
Williams Cos	73.45	+0.64
Xcel Energy	75.50	+0.09
Xylem	106.95	+0.40
Yum Brands	142.11	-1.78
Zimmer	92.29	-0.15
Zoetis	72.63	-0.23

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	84.95	84.96	84.68	84.52	98	2
	26-Dec	83.92	84.75	83.86	84.32	364255	1306326
	27-Mar				84.19	10	21
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.2525	96.255	96.2525	96.255	1704	386945
	26-Sep	96.1	96.13	96.085	96.1	326140	470277
	26-Dec	95.66	95.76	95.66	95.715	204752	581913
	27-Mar	95.31	95.455	95.305	95.39	197396	403263
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.14	95.305	95.14	95.23	195505	421320
	27-Sep	95.08	95.245	95.075	95.18	163591	288449
	27-Dec	95.085	95.26	95.08	95.2	158902	324753
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.3	97.315	97.29	97.31	321215	646959
	26-Dec	96.935	96.995	96.925	96.975	472537	973231
	27-Mar	96.615	96.725	96.605	96.69	390550	579590
	27-Jun	96.485	96.615	96.475	96.565	381979	578437
	27-Sep	96.45	96.59	96.44	96.535	347318	507266
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun				100.045	108	69162
	26-Sep	100.045	100.045	100.035	100.04	14005	73314
	26-Dec	99.93	99.97	99.925	99.95	18650	51301
	27-Mar	99.745	99.8	99.735	99.77	14278	42168
	27-Jun	99.555	99.615	99.545	99.575	15472	26061
	27-Sep	99.425	99.48	99.42	99.44	7329	26584
	27-Dec	99.335	99.395	99.325	99.355	6124	23618
FTSE100	26-Sep	10603	10725.5	10593	10655	86075	452771
	26-Dec	10679	10789	10669.5	10720.5	39656	32007
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8552.4	0	
	26-Dec				8598.3	0	

Tradeweb © 2017 Tradeweb Markets LLC. All rights reserved. The Tradeweb FTSE Gilt Closing Prices information contained herein is proprietary to Tradeweb; may not be copied or re-distributed; is not warranted to be accurate, complete or timely; and does not constitute investment advice. Tradeweb is not responsible for any loss or damage that might result from the use of this information.

Major indices

New York (midday)

Dow Jones	52660.67 (+596.57)
Nasdaq	26399.07 (+317.35)
S&P 500	7669.48 (+77.78)

Tokyo

Nikkei 225	64011.34 (-1259.61)

Hong Kong

Hang Seng	24805.63 (-148.84)

Amsterdam

Amsterdam AEX	1098.76 (+5.49)

Sydney

Australia AO	8920.20 (-88.10)

Frankfurt

DAX	25568.56 (+207.41)

Singapore

Singapore Straits	5695.93 (+6.18)

Brussels

Brussels BEL20	5713.36 (+24.53)

Paris

Paris CAC	8179.77 (+63.01)

Zurich

Zurich SMI	13775.27 (+35.17)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6325.13 (+56.16)

London

FTSE100	10650.44 (+41.52)
FTSE250	23975.73 (+89.79)
FTSE350	5797.05 (+22.50)
FTSE Eurotop 100	4935.28 (+27.27)
FTSE All Share	5733.64 (+22.14)
FTSE Non Financials	6249.10 (+8.77)
TechMark Focus	9043.34 (+30.86)
US$	1.3530 (+0.0002)
Euro	1.1649 (+0.0015)
SDR	0.9853 (+0.0003)
CPI Jul (2015=100)	142.9
RPI Jul (1987=100)	419.1
RPIX Jul (1987=100)	412.2

Commodities

Natural gas $

2.814	-0.02

Light crude oil

99.47	-3.01

Crude oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI NOV 26	95.5	-2.9
WTI DEC 26	91.15	-2.78
WTI JAN 27	87.24	-2.78
WTI FEB 27	84.1	-2.54
WTI MAR 27	81.43	-2.33

Products

Fuel Oil	562.029	22.709
Euro Naphtha	867.287	30.537

ICE futures

Gas oil

Oct	1482.75-1482.25	Feb	1226.75-1226.25
Nov	1399-1398.5	Mar	1187.5-1187.25
Dec	1324-1323.75		
Jan	1267.75-1267.25	Volume: 252272	

Brent

Nov	104.8-104.77	Feb	92.04-92.02
Dec	99.87-99.86	Mar	89.22-89.18
Jan	95.59-95.57	Volume: 992106	

Cocoa

Sep	4109 -44	Sep	4440 -31
Dec	4314 -30	Dec	4329 -45
Mar	4474 -25	Mar	4493 -25
May	4492 -23	May	4513 -23
Jul	4506 -21	Volume: 47368	

Robusta coffee

Sep	3524	May	3488 +18
Nov	3543 -14	Jul	3477 +18
Jan	3521 +8		
May	3488 +18	Volume: 31059	

White sugar

Oct	522 -15.9	Aug	526.5 -11.6
Dec	527.9 -13.5	Oct	520.3 -9.9
May	532.7 -13		
May	532.7 -13	Volume: 40724	

London grain futures

Liffe wheat (close €/t)

Nov	210 -2.75	May	215.5 -2.25
Jan	214.25	Jul	219.5
Mar	216	Volume: 13886	

London Metal Exchange (Official)

Cash	3Mth	26-Sep
Copper		
14238 +15.15	14237 +7.5	14235.5 +9.48
Lead		
1853.5 -9.5	1891.5 -9.5	1897.5 -5.03
Zinc		
4010 -5.24	3877 -17.5	3871.5 -9.68
Aluminium		
3266 -38.74	3255.5 -38	3252 -39.87
Nickel		
16320.95 -198.65	16470 -196	16478.5 -199.71
Nickel		
53086.32 -945.47	53305 -1094	53492.94 -1003.74

Eurotop 100

	Close	+/-	12mthhigh	12mthlow	Yield	P/E
ABB Ltd S SF	78.66	+0.90	89.14	53.78	1.20	30.37
Air Liquide Fr	166.52	-3.92	189.80	154.86	2.02	31.91
Airbus Fr	199.40	+0.44	221.30	157.42	1.60	37.20
Allianz G	442.30	-8.30	454.60	338.80	3.87	15.46
Anglo American UK GBP	39.90	-1.76	43.48	24.87	0.72	-16.32
Anheuser-Busch InBev B	67.18	-1.86	76.18	48.87	1.20	25.35
AP Moller-Maersk A Dn KR	21520.00	-120.00	22360.00	11870.00	2.23	55.61
AP Moller-Maersk B Dn KR	22330.00	-280.00	23290.00	11840.00	2.15	57.70
Arcelor Mittal	64.36	-2.88	68.56	28.84	0.80	37.86
ASML Holding NI	1478.40	+11.00	1741.00	674.10	0.53	74.25
AstraZeneca UK GBP	117.08	-2.98	157.32	98.92	2.04	24.00
Atlas Copco A Sw Kr	202.80	+1.00	212.30	149.45	1.48	37.35
Atlas Copco B Sw Kr	175.15	-0.80	185.20	134.00	1.71	32.26
AXA Fr	43.19	-1.45	45.66	36.55	5.37	12.03
Banco Santander Es	12.89	+0.02	13.12	8.10	1.51	14.16
Barclays UK GBP	4.94	-0.03	5.54	3.54	2.33	11.27
BASF G	51.83	-1.53	55.05	41.48	4.34	28.48
Bayer G	48.17	-0.68	53.92	25.78	0.23	13.09
BBVA Es	25.41	+0.02	25.44	15.39	2.93	97.73
BHP Group UK GBP	32.31	-1.14	35.92	19.18	3.97	22.58
BMW G	63.00	+0.20	97.92	56.40	6.98	5.30
BNP Paribas Fr	103.76	-0.78	113.82	65.12	5.59	10.84
BP UK GBP	5.65	+0.25	6.09	3.99	4.45	
Brit Amer Tobacco GBP	41.00	-0.25	53.26	36.77	5.98	11.68
BT Group UK GBP	2.02	+0.00	2.42	1.73	4.13	18.32
Centrica UK GBP	1.51	+0.01	2.20	1.47	3.76	-100.60
Christian Dior Fr	378.40	-15.40	611.50	370.80	3.78	13.11
Compagnie de Saint Gobain	71.52	-4.26	95.86	65.88	3.22	10.67
Danone Fr	61.38	-2.34	80.14	60.64	3.67	23.70
Deutsche Bank G	34.84	-0.73	35.84	23.82	2.87	11.03
Deutsche Telekom G	28.59	+0.19	34.36	23.53	3.50	14.51
Diageo UK GBP	16.03	-0.54	19.38	12.96	2.31	27.77
Enel It	8.96	-0.11	10.31	7.69	5.47	24.21
Engie (FR)	23.98	-0.03	29.89	17.79	4.30	15.78
Eni	24.00	+0.93	25.02	14.48	4.58	17.02
EON G	17.64	+0.14	20.39	14.98	3.23	26.72
Fresenius SE & Co	45.04	+1.41	47.98	42.09	2.33	57.74
GlaxoSmKline UK GBP	17.70	-0.76	22.82	14.55	3.95	12.55
Glencore Xstrata	6.00	-0.02	7.07	2.93	2.10	199.87
Heineken NV NI	70.28	-2.74	80.44	63.90	2.73	15.08
Henkel KgaA G	67.30	-3.20	77.25	57.85	3.05	22.97
Henkel KgaA Pref G	72.30	-4.12	84.20	61.28	2.86	13.56
Hermes Intl SCA Fr	1399.50	-57.50	2300.00	1404.00	1.29	31.86
HSBC UK GBP	15.53	-0.28	16.10	9.59	3.57	17.36
Iberdrola Es	20.16	+0.27	22.08	15.33	2.73	36.52
Imperial Tobacco UK GBP	24.90	+0.01	36.32	24.37	6.70	9.92
Inditex Es	54.02	-3.42	59.42	44.34	2.62	122.49
ING NI	32.09	+0.09	32.30	20.23	3.54	16.21
Intesa Sanpaolo It	6.83	+0.10	6.94	4.81	5.50	29.70
Linde G	464.82	-12.74	548.20	387.78	1.38	29.85
Lloyds Bank UK GBP	1.11	-0.01	1.18	0.81	3.61	15.88
L'Oreal Fr	379.85	-4.05	405.80	338.85	1.90	29.89
LVMH Fr	415.30	-13.80	654.70	405.25	3.13	19.00
Mercedez-Benz Group AG	46.68	+1.00	62.34	42.62	7.50	4.58
Munich Re G	503.40	-24.20	575.60	437.40	4.77	24.04
National Grid GBP	11.30	-0.20	14.29	10.26	4.29	17.26
Nestle S SF	77.54	-0.77	87.09	70.29	4.00	22.09
Novartis S SF	112.04	-17.54	132.68	96.03	3.30	36.73
Orange	15.54	+0.20	18.80	13.07	5.08	18.96
Pernod Ricard NV Fr	59.42	-2.34	93.04	58.60	7.91	9.26
Phillips Elect NI	21.14	-1.21	27.70	20.90	4.02	42.28
Prudential UK GBP	9.79	-0.44	12.38	9.10	2.10	8.59
Reckitt Benckiser UK GBP	50.00	-1.14	65.23	36.64	4.33	10.68
Richemont S SF	175.00	-10.45	202.20	127.20	1.89	37.32
Rio Tinto UK GBP	73.74	-2.67	91.17	45.55	4.66	16.26
Roche Holdings S SF	344.20	-12.80	375.80	291.00	2.85	21.27
Rolls-Royce UK GBP	14.55	-0.35	15.86	9.90	0.76	20.96
RWE AG	59.84	+1.44	62.00	35.22	2.01	24.13
Sanofi Aventis Fr	73.26	-3.00	91.15	71.25	5.62	9.36
SAP G	177.26	-8.42	244.30	127.50	1.41	28.87
Schneider Electric Fr	291.10	+3.10	312.30	220.40	1.44	33.89
Shell	35.33	+0.96	37.59	25.54	3.19	11.66
Siemens G	264.65	-8.00	291.70	198.00	2.02	25.13
Standard Chartered UK GBP	22.98	+0.54	22.98	13.52	2.23	15.91
Swatch Gp BR S SF	180.00	-5.20	223.10	145.95	2.50	48.13
Swiss Re AG S SF	136.85	-6.00	153.85	114.05	4.60	10.49
Telefonica Es	3.65	-0.03	4.63	3.24	6.65	2.42
Tenaris SA It	24.65	+0.49	27.82	14.54	4.16	7.42
Tesco UK GBP	4.65	-0.10	5.10	4.12	3.12	16.92
TotalEnergies	78.77	+2.67	81.34	49.24	4.44	11.43
UBS SA SF	44.56	-0.25	45.04	28.25	1.92	22.73
Vinci	111.45	-2.50	143.15	110.30	4.53	12.88
Vivendi	1.53	+0.04	3.21	1.46	2.62	13.89
Volkswagen G	81.18	-0.12	109.15	69.20	6.48	6.11
Volvo B Sw Kr	340.50	-8.00	374.50	244.90	3.82	20.10
Zurich Fin S SF	588.20	-13.40	626.00	521.00	5.10	18.39
Vodafone UK GBP	1.29	+0.03	1.31	0.83	3.08	-90.90

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%

ECB Refi 2.40%

Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%

Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7097	8.6945	-129.255	-392.676
Euro	1.1649	1.1634	-12.8	-39.54
Montreal	1.8748	1.8672	-25.51	-77.67
New York	1.3522	1.3508	1.17	3.07
Oslo	12.5476	12.5254	49.76	142
Tokyo	207.8440	208.2570	-47.91	-146.32
Zurich	1.1031	1.0979	-40.21	-118.16

FTSE volumes (000s)

3i Group	1,480	InterCont'l Hotels	282
Aberdeen Group	2,653	Intertek Group	213
AB Foods	897	Intl Cons Airlines	6,289
Admiral	353	Investec	2,123
Airtel Africa	1,145	JD Sports	10,019
Alliance Witan	524	Kingfisher	3,672
Ang Am	2,134	Land Sec	2,339
Antofagasta	770	Legal & Gen	7,798
AstraZeneca	1,474	Lion Finance	40
Autotrader Group	3,240	Lloyds Bkg Gp	74,797
Aviva	5,778	LondonMetric	6,497
Babcock Intl	2,367	Lon Stock Ex	1,004
BAE Sys	6,974	M&G	5,041
Barclays	20,126	Marks & Spen	3,433
Barratt Redrow	4,810	Melrose Ind	2,332
Beazley	627	Metlen Energy	62
BP	25,225	Natl Grid	5,228
Brit. Amer. Tob	3,438	NatWest Group	8,608
British Land	1,705	Next	222
BT Group	11,244	Pearson	1,412
Bunzl	1,917	Pershing Square	71
Burberry	1,588	Persimmon	1,523
Centrica	8,979	Polar CapTech	1,691
Coca-Cola Europac	182	Prudential	5,046
Coca-Cola HBC	394	Reckitt Benck	1,403
Compass	1,476	RELX	2,837
Computacenter	309	Rentokil Initial	4,309
ConvaTec	4,824	Rio Tinto	1,395
Croda	443	Rolls-Royce	14,200
DCC Energy	1,139	Sainsbury	4,110
Diageo	3,255	Schroders	2,124
Diploma	1,185	Scot Mort Inv Tst	1,484
Endeavour	363	Segro	2,637
Entain	2,082	Severn Trent	492
Experian	2,007	Shell	7,440
F&C Inv Trust	1,693	Smith & Nephew	1,884
Fresnillo	551	Smiths Gp	668
Games Workshop	95	Spirax Group	133
Glencore	18,895	SSE	1,495
GSK	3,934	Standard Chart	3,311
Haleon	23,434	Standard Life	1,755
Halma	622	St James's Place	2,346
Hiscox	582	Tesco	4,891
Howden Joinery	1,832	The Sage Grp	2,634
HSBC	9,108	Tritax Big Box	6,679
ICG	485	Unilever	1,863
IG Group	393	Utd. Utilities	1,257
IMI	375	Vodafone	38,069
Imperial Brands	2,158	Weir	756
Informa	1,760	Whitbread	1,137

Gold/precious metals

Bullion: Open $4319.17

Close $4369.923 **High** $4402.512

Low $4291.565

AM $4342.45 **PM** $4386.25

Platinum $1795.9

Silver $64.5176

Palladium $1310.013

Dollar rates

Australia	1.39340-1.39420
Canada	1.38647-1.38652
Denmark	6.44099-6.44194
Euro	0.86160-0.86200
Hong Kong	7.84250-7.84350
Japan	153.70000-153.70599
Malaysia	4.06800-4.07300
Norway	9.28070-9.28324
Singapore	1.26694-1.26701
Sweden	9.69221-9.69559
Switzerland	0.81580-0.81585

Other Sterling

Argentine peso	2044.08911-2044.09106
Australian dollar	1.88439-1.88455
Bahrain dinar	0.50880-0.51080
Brazilian real	6.89520-6.89720
Euro	1.16490-1.16570
Hong Kong dollar	10.60400-10.60800
Indian rupee	129.12830-129.20830
Indonesian rupiah	23790.49023-23830.49023
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41600-0.41800
Malaysian ringgit	5.50220-5.50420
New Zealand dollar	2.32436-2.32488
Singaporean dollar	1.71286-1.71371
South African rand

Unit-linked insurance investments

ABBEY LIFE
01202 292373
80 Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth BH8 8AL

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American Ser 4	6142.30	6465.90	-121.60	...
Custodian S4	674.10	709.60	-6.00	...
Equity Ser 4	1353.80	1214.60	-18.10	...
Ethical S4	508.60	535.40	-13.10	...
European S4	1805.60	1479.60	-19.00	...
Fixed Int Ser 4	785.30	826.60	-9.20	...
High Inc Ser 4	3547.20	3733.90	-80.70	...
International S4	1255.90	1322.00	-16.00	...
Japan Ser 4	851.50	896.30	+1.00	...
Man Ser 4	3091.00	3253.60	-34.10	...
Money Ser 4	584.70	615.40	-0.30	...
Prop Fd Ser 4	970.70	1021.80	-1.50	...

Formerly Hill Samuel Life Assurance Ltd

Equity Fund	4562.20	4827.70	-56.10	...
European Fund	7405.10	7836.10	-99.70	...
Fixed Intl	888.00	931.20	-9.10	...
Income Fund	3813.70	4035.70	-86.10	...
International	3416.00	3614.80	-43.50	...
Managed Series A	2936.10	3107.00	-30.30	...
Managed Units	5402.70	5687.00	-55.50	...
Money Series A	534.80	566.00	+0.20	...
Money Units	761.50	801.50	+0.40	...
Property Series A	1350.70	1429.30	-2.10	...
Property Units	2527.80	2660.80	-3.80	...
Smaller Cos	2880.20	3047.20	-18.40	...

Formerly Target Life Assurance Co Ltd

Deposit	393.30	414.00	+0.10	...
Financial Ser 1	425.70	448.10	-5.20	...
Fixed Interest	582.00	612.70	-6.10	...
Managed	2846.00	2995.80	-29.30	...
Mngd Growth	1237.80	1302.90	-14.80	...
Property	790.70	832.80	-1.30	...
TSB Intl	2398.00	2524.20	-30.60	...

AEGON SCOTTISH EQUITABLE
08456 100010
Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh EH12 9SE

American	3243.85	3414.58	-42.53	...
Cash	306.68	322.82	+0.11	...
Distribution	105.00	110.53	-0.75	...
Ethical	775.75	816.58	-15.55	...
European	1857.82	1955.61	-20.57	...
Fixed Interest	499.29	525.57	-3.70	...
Global	539.58	567.98	-5.12	...
International	1630.79	1716.62	-14.68	...
Japan	691.68	728.09	-2.57	...
Mixed	1213.96	1277.85	-11.11	...
Pacific	2524.92	2657.81	+3.21	...
Technology	10843.80	11414.50	-28.20	...
UK Equity	1173.76	1235.53	-19.19	...

ALBA LIFE
50 Bothwell St, Glasgow G2 6HR
0141 248 2000
Formerly Britannia Life

European	2349.10	2472.70	-31.60	...
Far East	915.10	963.30	+1.00	...
Fixed Interest	804.60	847.00	-8.00	...
International	2220.80	2337.70	-22.90	...
Japan	1127.00	1186.30	+1.40	...
Managed Fund	2009.10	2114.90	-17.00	...
Money Market	444.80	468.20	+0.20	...
North America	2290.60	2411.10	-46.20	...
Property	945.70	995.50	-3.70	...
UK Equity	3956.90	4165.10	-46.90	...

Pensions

Equity	2884.70	3036.50	-38.00	...
European	3079.90	3242.00	-49.30	...
Far Eastern	791.00	832.60	+0.20	...
Fixed Interest	830.30	874.00	-10.30	...
International	2045.80	2153.50	-24.70	...
Japan	586.10	617.00	+0.20	...
Managed	1486.80	1565.10	-14.30	...
Money Market	543.80	572.50	+0.30	...
North America	3628.10	3819.00	-83.20	...
Property	893.90	940.90	-3.60	...

AXA SUN LIFE
PO Box 1810, Bristol BS99 5SN
AXA Assurance-02476 236600
Sun Life-0117 989 3000
AXA Equity & Law-02476 235400
Life Assnce-AXA Equity & Law Series 6.1% AMC

Balced Ser 6	3391.90	3570.40	-27.80	...
Europe Ser 6	2688.50	2830.00	-31.50	...
UK Equities Ser 6	5627.60	5923.80	-76.80	...

Life Funds-Sun Life (Inc Birmingham Midshires) & AXA Assurance 1% AMC

Cash Acc	525.50	553.20	+0.10	...
Distribution Fund	377.60	397.50	-2.70	...
Equity Acc	8230.00	8663.20	-112.30	...
European	1269.70	1336.50	-14.80	...
Far Eastern Acc	3380.40	3558.30	+38.10	...
Fixed Int Acc	967.80	1018.70	-1.90	...
Global Eqty Acc	3869.80	4094.60	-36.90	...
Japan Acc	513.30	540.40	-2.20	...
Managed Acc	4157.60	4376.40	-34.10	...
North Amer Acc	4839.90	5094.60	-24.70	...
Pacific Acc	2639.00	2777.90	+47.00	...
Property Acc	1225.50	1290.00	-1.90	...

BARCLAYS LIFE ASSURANCE CO LTD
0845 603 5000
Level 12, 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP

500 Accum	2088.58	2198.51	-28.30	...
America Acc	4565.32	4805.60	-95.48	...
Comb Inc Acc	3720.84	3916.68	-36.08	...
Equity Acc	5576.98	5870.51	-25.57	...
Far East Growth	2466.17	2598.07	+63.57	...
Gilt 2 Init	183.59	193.26	-2.07	...
Gilt Edged Acc	839.56	883.75	-8.27	...
Inter 2 Init	686.22	722.34	-5.32	...
International Acc	3135.88	3300.93	-22.18	...
Japan Acc	696.68	733.35	+1.14	...
Managed 2 Init	674.83	710.35	-7.01	...
Managed Acc	3073.42	3235.18	-29.81	...
Managed Alpha	2387.68	2513.34	-32.34	...
Money Acc	488.11	513.80	+0.66	...
Prop 2 Init	218.83	230.34	+0.06	...
Property Acc	994.47	1046.81	+0.91	...
UK Growth Acc	1762.48	1855.24	-23.88	...
Univ Tech Acc	1368.83	1440.88	-9.68	...

& AXA Assurance 1% AM

Equity 2 Init	1217.08	1281.14	-17.32	...

CANADA LIFE
01707 651122
2-6 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5BA

Deposit Fund	578.70	609.10	...	...
Equity Fund	4057.20	4270.20	...	...
European	2489.00	2620.00	-25.00	...
Fixed Interest	940.00	989.40	-10.00	...
International	3669.00	3862.00	...	...
Intl Mgd	5167.00	5438.00	-30.00	...
Japanese	567.20	597.00	-0.90	...
Managed Fund	3470.00	3652.00	...	...
Money	605.30	637.10	+0.30	...
Multiple Inv	4463.00	4697.00	-56.00	...
North Amer	3490.00	3673.00	-54.00	...
Property Fund	1789.00	1883.00	...	...
UK Equity	6283.00	6613.00	-105.00	...
UK Property	1275.00	1331.00	...	...

CLERICAL MEDICAL INVESTMENT GROUP
Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0JH 0117 9290566
Life Funds

Cash	326.40	343.50	+0.20	...
Bst Acc S2	235.20	235.20	-2.60	...
Fidelity Bal	1479.90	1557.70	-18.10	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	516.00	543.10	-5.20	...
Non Equ	427.00	449.40	-3.10	...
Nth American	4937.50	5197.30	-42.80	...
Property	750.10	789.60	-0.90	...
UK Gwth	1928.70	2030.20	-27.10	...
With Prof Bd S2	127.80	127.80	...	...
With Profits Flex	135.60	135.60	...	...
With Profits Reg	435.70	458.70	+0.20	...

Pension Funds

Cash	384.20	404.30	+0.30	...
European	3170.00	3336.80	-60.70	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	593.10	624.30	-7.40	...
Halifax	150.30	158.20	+0.10	...
Nth American	8244.00	8677.20	-157.80	...
PP Bal Pens	1553.30	1635.00	-21.40	...
PP Caut Pens	454.00	477.90	-6.60	...
PP UK Gth Pens	1780.20	1874.50	-28.20	...
PP UK Prop Pens	840.50	884.70	-0.90	...
With Profits Reg	839.80	884.00	+0.70	...
With Profits Spec	831.90	875.70	+0.60	...

COUNTRYWIDE ASSURED
Harbour House, Portwat, Preston, Lancs PR2 2PR
CA Funds 0800 262536

Deposit Life	248.00	261.00	+0.10	...
Deposit Pen	355.10	372.70	+0.20	...
Intl Life	1566.70	1638.60	-9.40	...
Intl Pen	2284.70	2404.90	-18.60	...
Mod Life	1083.40	1140.40	-9.00	...
Mod Pen	1617.20	1702.30	-13.50	...
UK Equ Life	1167.00	1228.40	-15.20	...
UK Equ Pen	1539.50	1620.50	-24.80	...

CWA Series Funds 0870 600 0014

Equity Fd	2482.70	2613.40	-4.80	...
Glob Cash	404.20	425.60	+0.20	...
Glob Eqty	5398.20	5682.30	+5.10	...
Glob Fxd Int	1362.30	1434.00	+2.90	...
Glob Mgd	3207.40	3376.20	-0.60	...
Glob Prop	694.60	731.20	+0.10	...
Managed Fd	4008.60	4219.10	-0.20	...
Property Fd	571.00	601.10	...	...

FRIENDS PROVIDENT
01222 413366
Castle Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SH

Cash	359.50	378.40	+0.20	...
European	1749.30	1841.40	-16.50	...
Fixed Inter Life	697.80	734.50	-1.30	...
Index Linked	540.50	568.90	-3.70	...
Managed	1486.00	1564.20	-5.20	...
North American	1921.50	2022.70	-9.90	...
Overseas Equity	2696.30	2838.20	-24.80	...
Pacific Basin	870.40	916.20	+10.10	...
Property	765.20	805.60	-0.20	...
Stewardship	2315.70	2437.60	-50.50	...
UK Equity	2420.30	2547.60	-27.60	...

Formerly London & Manchester Assurance

Equity Ex Cap ‡	433.50	...	-5.00	...
Equity Life ‡	2531.00	...	-28.90	...
Fixed Interest ‡	722.30	...	-1.40	...
Fxd Int Ex Cap ‡	127.20	...	-0.30	...
Gtd Dep Ex Cap ‡	62.60	...	+0.10	...
Guaranteed Deposit ‡	470.20	...	-0.20	...
Inter Life ‡	2602.70	...	-24.00	...
Intl Ex Cap ‡	453.10	...	-4.20	...
Prop Ex Cap ‡	116.40	...	-0.10	...
Prop Life ‡	656.30	...	-0.30	...

FP Life Assurance Ex NM

American	5115.60	5384.80	-26.40	...
Deposit	596.50	627.90	+0.20	...
European	4220.50	4442.70	-39.90	...
Fixed Interest	1446.60	1520.60	-2.70	...
Income Acc	6241.50	6570.00	-70.00	...
Income Dist	935.40	984.60	-10.40	...
International	2655.80	2795.60	-24.60	...
Managed	3292.10	3465.40	-11.90	...
Property	2136.00	2248.40	-0.80	...
Singapore & Mal	1971.50	2075.30	+35.40	...
Tokyo Fund	1562.60	1644.80	-6.90	...
UK Equity	3317.40	3492.00	-37.90	...

Friends Prov (London & Manchester) Ass Ltd Fd

Flexible Acc ‡	2126.20	...	-7.60	...
Flexible Cap ‡	367.40	...	-1.30	...
Inv Trust Acc ‡	5821.80	...	-36.00	...
Inv Trust Cap ‡	978.90	...	-6.00	...

GUARDIAN
01253 733151
Ballam Road, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire FY8 4JZ

Deposit	498.20	525.00	+0.70	...
Equity Life	6692.20	7044.60	-90.40	...
European	1128.70	1188.10	-16.60	...
Fixed Interest	1716.50	1806.90	-12.20	...
Index Linked	648.50	682.60	-4.60	...
Inter Life	4510.70	4748.10	-66.20	...
Managed Life	3769.60	3984.90	-39.50	...
North American	2317.80	2439.80	-34.00	...
Pacific	1399.30	1473.00	-20.60	...
Prop Life	1438.30	1514.00	-13.80	...

HALIFAX LIFE LTD
PO Box 285, York Y01 1YB 01904 611110
Life Funds

Balanced	126.77	133.44	-1.55	...
Foundation	136.44	143.61	-1.88	...
Opportunity	174.53	183.71	-2.76	...

Pension Funds

Balanced S2	138.89	146.19	-1.96	1.00
Foundation S2	146.38	154.07	-2.35	1.00
Opportunity S2	190.33	200.34	-3.41	1.00

LEGAL & GENERAL INVESTMENT MGMT
0203 1243000
One Coleman Street, EC2R 5AA

British Opp	1134.30	1194.00	-20.80	...
Cash	485.20	510.70	+0.20	...
Equity	6999.20	7367.60	-115.70	...
Fixed Interest	1336.70	1407.00	-11.00	...
Index Linked Gilt	588.10	619.00	-2.40	...
International	3878.10	4082.10	-45.10	...
Life Property	1556.00	1637.90	+0.60	...
Managed	4145.30	4363.50	-32.30	...

LINCOLN FINANCIAL GROUP
Barnett Way, Barnwood, Gloucester, GL4 3RZ
01452 371371 For Further prices 0800 7315139
Life

Balanced Mgd 3	2059.40	2167.70	-12.60	...
European	1183.70	1246.00	-15.70	...
Far Eastern	2720.20	2862.30	+86.00	...
Green	760.20	800.20	-10.40	...
International	915.90	964.10	-1.10	...
Japan	399.00	420.00	+2.40	...
North Amer	6439.30	6778.20	-36.20	...
UK Equity Gwth	2797.60	2944.80	-42.20	...

Pension

Balanced Mgd 3	4943.40	5203.50	-29.40	...
European	1991.00	2095.70	-31.90	...
Far Eastern	4632.20	4875.90	+82.50	...
Green	1287.20	1355.50	-21.30	...
International	1470.50	1547.80	-1.10	...
Japan	536.50	564.70	+2.20	...
North Amer	20660.90	21748.30	-138.30	...
UK Eqty Gwth	5172.20	5444.40	-96.60	...
UK Fxd Int	1115.30	1173.90	-14.90	...

LLOYDS TSB LIFE LTD
01634 834000
Mountbatten Hse, Chatham, Kent
Life Funds

Equity	2373.00	2497.90	-36.20	...
Managed	4967.40	4967.40	-66.90	...
Income	5084.00	5351.60	-88.80	...
Managed Inv	2533.90	2667.20	-34.30	...

Life Funds-Series Two Current Series

American	5420.80	5706.10	-101.00	...
Balanced ‡	779.00	...	-5.00	...
Cash	456.80	480.20	+0.20	...
European Gth	1267.90	1334.60	-23.20	...
Fixed Interest	726.10	764.30	-8.90	...
German Growth	2389.00	2514.80	-46.30	...
Income	4655.00	4900.00	-81.50	...
Japan Growth	477.20	502.30	-8.70	...
Managed Inv	2780.80	2927.10	-37.50	...
Pacific Basin	2005.50	2111.10	-36.30	...
Property	1759.00	1851.60	-2.00	...
SmlR Cos Recov	6707.20	7060.90	-120.20	...
Worldwide Gth	3167.30	3334.00	-58.80	...

Pension Funds

American Pens	3602.50	3792.10	-77.40	...
Cash Pen	355.70	374.40	+0.20	...
European Pen	2514.20	2647.20	-54.10	...
Far East Pen	909.40	957.20	-19.50	...
Fixed Int Pen	515.00	542.10	-7.20	...
FTSE 100	604.40	636.20	-9.30	...
Managed Pen	1456.20	1532.90	-20.70	...
Property Pen	1103.20	1161.30	-1.30	...
UK Equity Pen	1197.60	1260.60	-25.80	...

LONDON LIFE
0117 984 7777
Spectrum Bond Street, Bristol, BS1 3AL

Deposit	572.10	572.10	+0.30	...
Deposit P	796.60	796.60	+0.40	...
Equity	5761.50	5761.50	-38.80	...
Equity A	1274.80	1341.50	-19.00	...
Equity P	5224.30	5224.30	-92.80	...
Fixed Int A	487.10	512.80	-4.90	...
Fixed Int P	1763.90	1763.90	-22.00	...
Fixed Interest	1151.50	1151.50	-11.50	...
Index Stock A	478.20	503.40	-1.60	...
Index Stock P	785.20	785.20	-3.30	...
Indexed Stock	640.60	640.60	-2.10	...
International	2325.70	2325.70	-21.20	...
International A	1385.40	1458.40	-12.60	...
International P	3242.70	3242.70	-34.40	...
Mixed	3306.90	3306.90	-26.20	...
Mixed A	1036.20	1090.80	-8.90	...
Mixed P	3366.90	3366.90	-33.30	...
Property	875.00	875.00	+0.40	...
Property A	373.40	393.10	+0.10	...
Property P	731.70	731.70	+0.40	...

MERCHANT INVESTORS ASSURANCE CO LTD
St Bartholomews House, Lewins Mead
Bristol BS1 2NH

Far East	1151.60	1212.20	+1.70	...
Gilt Edged	1296.40	1364.60	-20.50	...
Interest Fund	611.70	643.90	+0.10	...
Intl Equity	2939.20	3093.90	-52.80	...
Managed Fd	1449.00	1525.30	-10.90	...
North American	1225.40	1289.90	+1.80	...
Property	1606.10	1690.60	-17.10	...
UK Equity	1556.50	1638.40	-46.00	...

MGM ASSURANCE
MGM House, Heene Road, Worthing
BN11 2DY 01903 836000

Deposit Acc	420.10	442.21	+0.22	...
Fixed Interest Acc	1240.40	1305.69	-4.11	...
Managed Acc	2097.28	2207.72	-20.54	...
Property	250.20	263.30	...	...
Property Acc	900.64	948.04	-1.78	...

NAT WEST LIFE ASSCE LTD
PO Box 886, Trinity Quay, Bristol BS99 5LJ

Growth Mgd Pens	790.79	832.41	-7.21	...

NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE
Society- Ex NUAM Funds
PO Box 140, Norwich NR3 1PP
01603 622200

Deposit Fund	693.95	730.48	+0.24	...
Equity Fund	23179.38	24399.98	-289.79	...
Fixed Int Fd	1641.72	1728.13	-9.49	...
Higher Inc Plus	252.22	265.51	-0.91	...
Intl Fund	1912.74	2013.41	-19.49	...
Managed Fund	8510.18	8958.09	-66.22	...
Property Fd	2692.95	2834.69	+1.17	...

Formerly Commercial Union

Cash	345.40	363.60	+0.10	...
Fxd Int	510.60	537.50	-3.00	...
Index-Lnkd	477.70	502.90	-3.10	...
Int Equity	2067.30	2176.10	-21.20	...
Property	1907.70	2008.10	-15.00	...
UK Equity	2749.20	2894.30	-34.70	...
Var Ann (5) ‡	413.30	...	...	...
Var Ann Acc (5) ‡	8364.20	...	...	...

Formerly General Accident

American	2440.20	2568.60	-42.50	...
Cash Deposit	292.70	308.20	...	...
European Equity	1489.30	1567.70	-15.80	...
Fixed Int	428.80	451.40	-2.50	...
Index-Linked	463.80	488.20	-3.00	...
International	1355.90	1427.20	-11.90	...
Japan Equity	619.40	647.80	-0.10	...
Japan Smlr Cos	629.50	662.70	-0.10	...
Managed	964.10	1014.90	-7.60	...
Pacific Fund	2066.90	2175.70	+65.80	...
Property	652.20	687.00	+0.20	...
UK Equity	1574.20	1657.20	-19.80	...
Unitised Profit	466.30	490.90	+0.30	...

Formerly Provident Mutual

Deposit Initial	93.40	98.30	+0.10	...
Deposit Ord	362.10	381.20	+0.10	...
Equity Init	1048.30	1103.50	-13.20	...
Equity Ord	4127.00	4344.20	-51.90	...
Fixed Int Init	168.20	177.10	-1.00	...
Fixed Int Ord	650.10	684.30	-3.80	...
I-Linked Gilt Init	167.50	176.30	-1.00	...
I-Linked Gilt Ord	586.20	616.90	-3.70	...
Managed Initial	586.10	617.00	-4.60	...
Managed Ord	2283.00	2403.20	-17.90	...
Oseas Equity Init	657.00	691.60	-6.70	...
Oseas Equity Ord	2708.20	2850.80	-27.80	...
Property Init	273.90	288.30	+0.20	...
Property Ord	1051.10	1106.40	+0.40	...

NPI
020 7477 5567
55 Moorgate, London EC2

Americas	4080.70	4295.50	-48.90	...
Deposit	402.30	423.50	+0.20	...
Far East	2979.60	3136.20	+17.10	...
Fixed Interest	936.00	985.20	-9.60	...
Indexed Gilt	611.10	643.20	-2.10	...
Managed	2252.70	2371.30	-19.70	...
Overseas Equity	3687.20	3881.90	-34.80	...
UK Equity	3395.40	3574.20	-55.90	...

PEARL
The Pearl Centre, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6FY 01733 470 470

Inv Equity	8474.40	8920.50	-135.30	...
Inv Managed	5220.60	5495.80	-83.80	...
Inv Prop Ac Grs	1002.50	1055.30	+0.60	...
Inv Prop Dist	317.20	333.90	+0.20	...
Ret Managed	6357.10	6691.70	-61.40	...

PHOENIX LIFE LTD
Edward Pavilion, Liverpool L3 4SL 0151 239 3000
For further fund prices please ring: 0800 731 2031
Lifestyle Bond Funds (Post 29/01/01)

Cautious Mgd ‡	323.40	...	-2.80	...
Deposit ‡	174.20	...	+0.10	...
Equity ‡	413.70	...	-6.40	...
Equity Inc ‡	423.20	...	-5.60	...
Managed ‡	577.30	...	-7.20	...
Far East ‡	632.50	...	...	...
Fixed Int ‡	204.60	...	-1.90	...
FTSE All Share Tkr ‡	435.60	...	-5.50	...
Income Dist I ‡	125.90	...	-1.20	...
Income Dist II ‡	123.80	...	-1.20	...
International ‡	503.40	...	-6.30	...
Japan Gth ‡	335.30	...	+0.40	...
Managed ‡	391.50	...	-3.60	...
North America ‡	782.00	...	-15.60	...
Pacific Gth ‡	923.60	...	-0.40	...
Property ‡	421.60	...	+0.40	...
UK Leader ‡	419.50	...	-5.30	...
UK Smlr Cos ‡	350.10	...	-2.70	...
With Profits ‡	185.73	...	+0.21	...

Other Life & Pension Funds

Pens Unit W Prof	303.92	319.92	+0.39	...
With Profits Bd	225.56	225.56	+0.23	...

Pensions Solution Funds (Post 6/4/2001)

Balanced Grth ‡	376.20	...	-3.80	...
Cash Deposit ‡	191.60	...	+0.10	...
Equity ‡	441.20	...	-8.20	...
Equity Inc ‡	452.40	...	-7.30	...
European ‡	661.70	...	-10.50	...
Fixed Int ‡	812.30	...	-0.90	...
Fixed Int ‡	230.20	...	-2.80	...
FTSE All Share Tkr ‡	525.10	...	-6.50	...
Index Linked ‡	252.20	...	-1.00	...
International ‡	646.20	...	-9.40	...
Managed Grth ‡	488.30	...	+4.80	...
Pens Protector ‡	192.70	...	-1.80	...
Property ‡	567.80	...	+0.60	...
UK Leader ‡	479.40	...	-7.00	...
Unitised W Prof ‡	257.85	...	+0.33	...

PRUDENTIAL INDIVIDUAL LIFE FUNDS
0345 601601
55 King's Road, Reading, RG1 3AH

Euro Fund	2745.80	2890.30	-41.40	...
N American Fd	2942.70	3097.60	-51.90	...

Scottish Amicable Life Fds (First Series)

Cash Fund	586.50	617.40	+0.70	...
Equity Fund	9015.00	9489.40	-155.00	...
Fixed Interest	1177.30	1239.30	-13.20	...
Intl Fund	4223.10	4445.40	-58.20	...
L&G UK Prop S2	112.80	118.70	-0.50	...
Managed Fund	4306.20	4532.80	-46.10	...

PRUDENTIAL LIFE FUNDS
01786 448844
PO Box 14962, Craigforth, Stirling, FK9 4ZD

BonusBond	370.20	389.60	-5.30	...
Prud Inher Bd (Cap) ‡	129.10	...	-1.20	...
Prud Inher Bd (Inc) ‡	17.60	...	+4.10	...

Scottish Amicable Life Fds (First Series)

Cash	414.80	436.60	...	...
Equity	3545.00	3731.60	-60.80	...
Fixed Interest	872.50	918.30	-9.80	...
Index-Linked	514.10	541.20	-4.90	...
International	3044.40	3204.70	-41.80	...
L&G Prop S1	101.60	107.00	-0.50	...
Managed	2659.40	2799.40	-28.40	...

The M & G Series

Deposit Bond Acc	577.70	606.70	+0.70	...
Equity Bond Acc ‡	7208.90	7569.40	-122.90	...
European Bd Acc	2833.50	2975.30	-37.80	...
Extra Yld Bd Acc	6006.30	6391.30	-55.60	...
Gilt Bond Acc	938.60	985.60	-10.50	...
High Yield Bond ‡	521.20	547.40	-4.70	...
International Bd	7407.00	7777.50	-145.60	...
Japan Bond Acc	804.10	844.50	-1.90	...
L&G Prop Acc	101.10	106.20	-0.40	...
Managed Bond Acc	4792.10	5031.80	-51.40	...

SAVE & PROSPER INSURANCE AND PENSIONS
St James's House, 27-43 Eastern Road, Romford RM1 3NH
Customer Helpline:0845 3000144

Bal Inv Fund	474.80	498.90	-3.90	...
Deposit Fund (2)	722.20	760.20	+0.40	...
Gilt Fund	1498.20	1577.10	-3.80	...
Global Equity Fd	2512.40	2644.60	-15.60	...
Property Fund (46)	251.30	264.50	...	...

SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENTS
0131 225 2211
19 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 1YE

American	2875.40	3026.20	-41.30	...
Deposit	349.40	367.80	+0.10	...
European	4011.20	4222.40	-52.00	3.00
Fixed Interest	703.30	740.40	-8.30	...
Global Mgd	2278.30	2398.20	-5.80	...
Index Linked	639.10	672.80	-5.20	...
Managed	1736.70	1849.20	-1.10	...
Pacific	2059.30	2167.70	+3.00	...
Property	860.90	906.30	-9.60	...
UK Equity	2410.20	2537.10	-27.10	...
Worldwide	706.20	743.40	-8.00	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL ASSURANCE
0141 248 6321
301 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5HN

Cash Fund	314.20	330.70	+0.

MEET ALIDA

SPEECH THERAPIST PARTICIPANT

Alida's an aspiring speech therapist - but there's no speech therapy training available in her country of Madagasar. Training on board the *Africa Mercy* is providing her with specialist skills that will one day help patients find their voice.

Each year, 3,400 healthcare professionals receive training through Mercy Ships.
Find out how you can make a lasting impact for even more at
mercyships.org.uk/journey

Journey With Us

Registered with FR FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Mercy Ships UK Registered Office: 12 Meadway Court, Stevenage SG1 2EF Registered Charity No: 1053055.
Registered Charity in Scotland No: SC039743. Company No: 3147724 (England and Wales).
© 2026 Mercy Ships UK Photo: Mercy Ships/Tirsa Tapia Zamora.

Mercy Ships

MotoNovo

Car Finance Agreements Between 2007 & 2024

Customers of MotoNovo Finance have been refunded over **£2,260.87*** using our partner law firm. In less than 60 seconds, you could locate your old agreements that might be eligible for a refund.

Enter your basic details to get started.

Agreements found: **2**
Average refund: **£2,260.87***

Find My Agreements*
Scan the QR Code →

Or visit:
makeapcpclaim.co.uk/times

Fountain Finances is a claims management company. You can complain for free directly to your lender, the Financial Ombudsman Service, or through the FCA's free motor finance redress scheme. We receive a referral fee from our partner law firm if you choose to proceed. *£2,260.87 is the average claim value per MotoNovo agreement of our partner law firm, HD Law as of July 31st 2025. *Our Free Check confirms whether motor finance agreements have been identified from your credit search and the number found. Further details of any agreements will be provided once HD Law is instructed.

Bathrooms designed for **independent living**

Shower safely.

Bathe comfortably.

Comfortable seats, grab rails & latest safety features

Designed for comfort, style & independence

Fast, expert installation with minimal disruption

Your journey to a **safer bathroom**

1 Free home consultation
Design advice, a free 3D design and fixed-price quote.

2 Survey & planning
Your dedicated project manager ensures every detail is planned.

3 Expert installation
Professionally fitted in just a few days by your local team.

4 Aftercare & warranty
Enjoy ongoing support and complete peace of mind.

"Safe, easy access bathing can help maintain your independence and wellbeing."

Dr Hilary Jones - GP and Health advisor

"Delighted!" ★★★★★ Trustpilot

Everyone was very helpful, friendly and caring. We can't wait to show our family and friends our new wetroom.

MobilityPlus

www.mobility-plus.co.uk

For your FREE brochure call

0800 088 4810

Please quote reference **MCK704**

Built for the cold in style so good you'll need one each

Cotton TRADERS

HALF PRICE

now £29

BONDED FLEECE JACKET

~~£58~~ **£29 HALF PRICE**

A double-layered fleece with a soft sherpa inner and zip pockets

Sizes S to 5XL

at an irresistible price

Length approx 30" (76cm)
Machine Washable
100% Polyester Micro Fleece
Bordeaux Willow Ink

AD12055

Plus only £3.99 standard delivery

Fast and reliable UK delivery service with easy returns

order today at **cottontraders.com**

0844 844 1111

Enter product code, add to your basket and then add your promotional code to apply your savings online.
14 day money back guarantee if not completely satisfied.

Trustpilot

Post to: **Cotton Traders, Neptune House, Pacific Court, Pacific Road, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 5BJ**

PRODUCT CODE	SIZE	1ST COLOUR CHOICE	2ND COLOUR CHOICE	QTY	TOTAL

UK STANDARD DELIVERY £3.99

TOTAL

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

PLEASE USE THIS PROMOTIONAL CODE TO CLAIM YOUR OFFER

E406

Card Number

Expiry Date

Security Code*

Cheque payable to: **Cotton Traders Limited**

Payment taken at point of order. We aim to deliver within 3 working days from dispatch, stock subject to availability. We comply with Consumer Contract Regulations; you have the right to cancel your order no later than 14 days after the day on which you receive your goods. Inform us of your wish to cancel in writing, by letter or email. Returns are not free, full details are on your delivery note. Return goods within 28 days of cancellation. Calls to 0844 numbers will cost 7p per minute plus your phone company's access charge. £3.99 UK standard delivery. International delivery, see website for prices. Offer applies to purchases in GBP only. Exception is Ireland orders which will be charged in EUR at the set conversion rate. Prices quoted are correct at time of production but can vary. One promotion per order. **Marketing and Promotions:** We want to make sure you don't miss out on our great products and offers, so we will keep you informed by post. If you do not want to hear from us, please let us know. I do not want to be contacted by: Post ☐. We take your privacy seriously. For details of our privacy policy and full terms and conditions visit cottontraders.com. *Last 3 digits on back of card. This is mandatory to process your order. Offer ends 31.12.2026

Today Some warm spells of sunshine but areas of cloud will bring rain in many areas. Max 25C (77F), min 4C (39F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday	yesterday	Rain mm 24 hrs to 9pm	Sun hr* yesterday
Aberdeen	18	C	1.4	0.7
Aberporth	16	C	0.2	0.5
Anglesey	17	C	0.6	0.7
Aviemore	18	C	1.6	0.4
Barnstaple	19	C	1.0	**
Bedford	19	C	1.0	**
Belfast	16	PC	1.8	0.6
Birmingham	19	C	0.2	**
Bournemouth	20	C	2.0	1.2
Bridlington	18	C	0.2	**
Bristol	19	C	1.0	2.0
Camborne	18	C	1.2	0.1
Cardiff	19	C	4.6	1.3
Edinburgh	17	PC	0.6	0.2
Eskdalemuir	15	C	7.6	0.0
Glasgow	16	PC	1.2	0.3
Hereford	20	C	0.2	**
Herstmonceux	21	C	2.4	3.8
Ipswich	19	C	2.6	7.7
Isle of Man	17	C	0.0	0.5
Isle of Wight	22	PC	1.8	**
Jersey	19	C	3.0	4.1
Keswick	16	C	6.4	**
Kinloss	17	**	0.8	0.5
Leeds	16	C	2.0	**
Lerwick	14	C	4.8	0.0
Leuchars	18	PC	0.0	0.0
Lincoln	19	C	0.8	5.4
Liverpool	17	C	3.0	**
London	22	C	3.2	5.0
Lyneham	19	C	0.6	2.3
Manchester	19	C	2.6	0.5
Margate	20	PC	1.4	6.0
Milford Haven	18	PC	1.4	**
Newcastle	16	C	1.0	**
Nottingham	18	C	1.0	3.8
Orkney	14	C	5.6	**
Oxford	19	C	0.8	**
Plymouth	20	C	1.8	**
Portland	19	C	0.2	**
Scilly, St Mary's	19	C	1.6	**
Shoreham	20	**	4.8	4.2
Shrewsbury	19	C	0.0	0.9
Snowdonia	15	D	6.2	**
Southend	21	C	2.0	7.0
South Uist	15	PC	1.4	**
Stornoway	15	PC	0.0	0.0
Tiree	16	PC	0.4	0.0
Whitehaven	15	C	7.8	0.1
Wick	16	C	3.0	**
Yeovilton	20	PC	0.0	1.2

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	30	PC	Madeira	27	PC
Amsterdam	19	SH	Madrid	27	S
Athens	31	S	Malaga	26	PC
Auckland	14	B	Mallorca	28	PC
Bahrain	43	S	Malta	34	S
Bangkok	31	PC	Melbourne	16	PC
Barbados	31	PC	Mexico City	25	B
Barcelona	27	PC	Miami	23	T
Beijing	29	S	Milan	21	PC
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	24	R
Belgrade	27	S	Montreal	22	B
Berlin	21	S	Moscow	16	PC
Bermuda	28	PC	Mumbai	30	**
Bordeaux	24	PC	Munich	18	PC
Brussels	20	B	Nairobi	23	B
Bucharest	29	S	Naples	29	PC
Budapest	16	C	New Orleans	28	C
Buenos Aires	21	S	New York	31	B
Cairo	31	S	Nice	25	B
Calcutta	29	**	Nicosia	32	PC
Canberra	16	PC	Oslo	11	R
Cape Town	24	S	Paris	24	S
Chicago	23	B	Perth	23	B
Copenhagen	17	B	Prague	16	PC
Corfu	33	PC	Reykjavik	6	SH
Delhi	32	**	Riga	17	PC
Dubai	38	S	Rio de Janeiro	24	R
Dublin	16	B	Riyadh	43	S
Faro	27	S	Rome	29	PC
Florence	27	PC	San Francisco	29	PC
Frankfurt	23	S	Santiago	18	SH
Geneva	21	S	São Paulo	16	R
Gibraltar	23	PC	Seoul	24	S
Helsinki	16	PC	Seychelles	30	PC
Hong Kong	31	PC	Singapore	30	SH
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	14	SH
Istanbul	25	S	Stockholm	14	PC
Jerusalem	31	PC	Sydney	18	B
Johannesburg	22	S	Tel Aviv	31	PC
Kuala Lumpur	29	SH	Tenerife	28	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	20	SH
Lanzarote	28	PC	Vancouver	18	PC
Las Palmas	28	PC	Venice	23	PC
Lima	22	B	Vienna	14	B
Lisbon	31	S	Warsaw	16	PC
Los Angeles	31	PC	Washington	31	B
Luxor	37	S	Zurich	20	PC

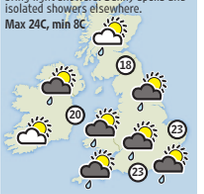
Five days ahead

Some drier and sunny periods but most of the time it will be cloudy with showery rain

Tomorrow

Rather cloudy over England and Wales with a longer period of rain over southeastern areas clearing to bring light showers. Sunny spells and isolated showers elsewhere.

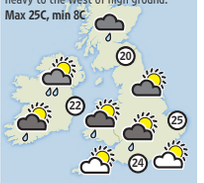
Max 24C, min 8C



Monday

Mainly dry and warm with sunny spells and a few light showers in southern and eastern England. Mostly cloudy with outbreaks of rain elsewhere, heavy to the west of high ground.

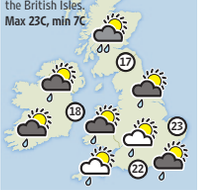
Max 25C, min 8C



Tuesday

A band of cloud and rain will clear southeastern England in the morning, followed by sunny spells and a scattering of showers over the rest of the British Isles.

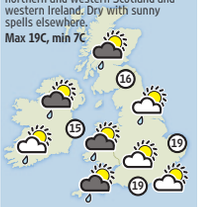
Max 23C, min 7C



Wednesday

A scattering of showers and sunny intervals in Wales, western England, northern and western Scotland and western Ireland. Dry with sunny spells elsewhere.

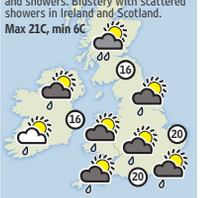
Max 19C, min 7C



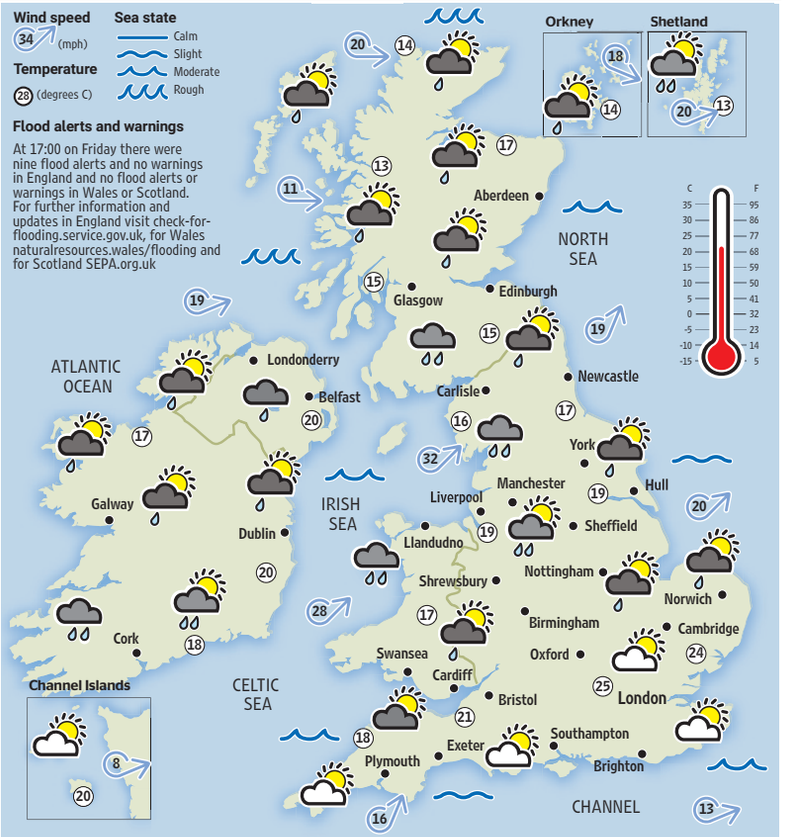
Thursday

Rather cloudy with a band of showery rain spreading eastwards over England and Wales, followed by sunny spells and showers. Blustery with scattered showers in Ireland and Scotland.

Max 21C, min 6C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest



General situation: Dry with sunny spells in southern England but mainly cloudy with outbreaks of rain elsewhere.

Cen N Eng, NW Eng, NE Eng, N Ireland, Lake District, SW Scotland, Borders, IoM, Edinburgh and Dundee, Glasgow, Argyll, Moray Firth, Aberdeen, N Isles, Cen Highland, NW Scotland, NE Scotland: Mainly cloudy with outbreaks of rain in the morning, then sunny spells and showers during the afternoon. Moderate to fresh southwesterly winds, veering westerly. Maximum 21C (70F), minimum 4C (39F).

SW Eng, Cen S Eng, SE Eng, London, Channel Is: A dry and warm day with plenty of sunshine, although turning cloudier later. Light to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 25C (77F), minimum 15C (59F).

Republic of Ireland: Mostly cloudy with outbreaks of rain spreading eastwards, especially heavy and persistent in the south. Moderate to fresh southwesterly winds. Maximum 20C (68F), minimum 8C (46F).

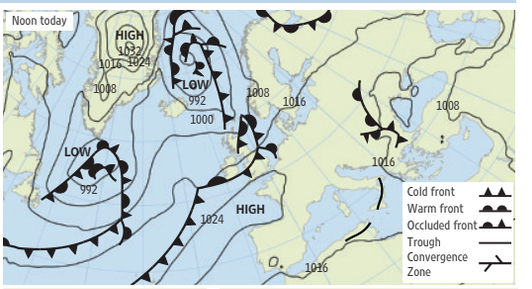
E Mids, E Anglia: Dry with sunny spells in the morning, turning cloudier during the afternoon with the risk of a few showers. Light increasing to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 24C (75F), minimum 16C (61F).

E Eng, W Mids, Wales: Dry with sunny intervals at first, then turning cloudy with outbreaks of rain. Moderate to fresh southwesterly winds. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 11C (52F).

Tides

Tidal predictions. Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	02:32	4.6	15:05	4.3
Avonmouth	08:52	13.8	21:08	14.1
Belfast	--:--	--	12:47	3.3
Cardiff	08:41	12.7	20:57	13.0
Devonport	07:26	5.5	19:36	5.7
Dover	--:--	--	12:46	7.0
Dublin	00:40	3.5	13:12	3.1
Falmouth	06:49	5.2	19:03	5.5
Greenock	01:38	3.7	14:22	3.3
Harwich	01:03	4.2	13:17	4.2
Holyhead	11:52	5.6	--:--	--
Hull	07:37	8.0	20:14	7.6
Leith	03:49	5.9	16:16	5.7
Liverpool	--:--	--	12:44	9.5
London Bridge	03:20	7.2	15:36	7.2
Lowestoft	10:41	2.8	23:26	2.5
Milford Haven	07:46	7.3	20:02	7.5
Morecambe	--:--	--	12:54	9.7
Newhaven	--:--	--	12:50	7.0
Newquay	06:36	7.2	18:52	7.4
Oban	07:19	4.0	19:26	4.2
Penzance	06:08	5.6	18:26	5.8
Portsmouth	--:--	--	13:04	4.8
Shoreham	--:--	--	13:01	6.6
Southampton	02:26	4.4	12:37	4.6
Swansea	07:55	9.7	20:10	9.9
Tees	04:59	5.8	17:29	5.6
Weymouth	08:33	2.2	20:42	2.4



Synoptic situation

A ridge of high pressure will bring mainly dry conditions over southern Britain with sunny spells. Rather cloudy over the rest of Britain and Ireland with various fronts bringing outbreaks of rain. Becoming drier in northern Scotland during the afternoon as an occluded front clears eastwards. Higher pressure will build over the British Isles tomorrow.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Thorney Island, West Sussex, 23.2C
Coldest: Cairngorm, 2.5C
Wettest: Nantyglo, Gwent, 9.6mm
Sunniest: Weybourne, 8.5hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 06.30
Sun sets: 19.22
Moon rises: 08.08
Moon sets: 19.28
First quarter: September 18

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	20:06-06:05
Belfast	20:18-06:23
Birmingham	20:00-06:08
Cardiff	20:04-06:14
Exeter	20:05-06:16
Glasgow	20:13-06:15
Liverpool	20:05-06:12
London	19:52-06:02
Manchester	20:02-06:09
Newcastle	20:01-06:05
Norwich	19:47-05:55
Penzance	20:13-06:25
Sheffield	19:59-06:06

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

In the planning for D-Day in 1944, it was crucial to calculate the tides on the invasion beaches of Normandy. A demanding set of tidal and also lunar conditions was needed, but the Allies knew little about the tides except that they were were rapid, there was a large range between high and low tides, and the beaches were shallow, making accuracy particularly crucial. Arthur Doodson, the world's leading expert on tides at the Liverpool Tidal Institute, was brought in to make the calculations — but secrecy was of such paramount importance that he was not told the locations of the beaches, and had to calculate daily tides over a four-month period starting on April 1, 1944.

Doodson slowly ground out the calculations using a mechanical calculator. Eventually, after six months' work, only three dates met the needs of the military for the best tidal conditions and full moon: June 5, 6, or 7. But the military planners also needed to know about the conditions on the beaches — their slopes, depths, ability to support heavy vehicles, as well as German defences in the sea. This needed dangerous surveys to be made by men skilled in navigation, surveying and engineering. Because the coast was too shallow for conventional submarines to get close to, the reconnaissance teams landed at night using X-craft midget submarines only 16m long and 1.75m wide carrying up to five men in cramped conditions. The midget submarines were towed by larger submarines before being released closer to shore and the coast checked for German patrols using a periscope. Frogmen swam ashore to make their surveys and afterwards slipped away before meeting the larger submarine waiting out at sea. These surveys proved crucially important for the D-Day landings.

The X-craft later acted as beacons on D-Day itself on June 6, in Operation Gambit, guiding the landing craft of the invasion force to their correct locations and past German defence obstacles and natural hazards such as shoals.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

WeatherQuest
weatherquest.co.uk

TIMES Travel Partner

Enjoy a spectacular concert like no other courtesy of the Dutch maestro, André Rieu, in his idyllic hometown of Maastricht. Joined by his Johann Strauss Orchestra, choir and soloists – as well as celebrity guests – André takes to the stage for a series of his famous summer shows on Vrijthof Square.

Board the Eurostar from London St. Pancras to Brussels, then by coach into the Netherlands for a three-night stay in Eindhoven, Veldhoven or Helmond. Admire Utrecht's marvellous architecture, canals and captivating museums, and explore historic Maastricht ahead of an extraordinary evening with André Rieu.

Air packages available from **£953pp**

FOUR DAYS NOW FROM **£796** per person

CALL TODAY ON **0808 231 5021**
thetimes.com/nh-andremaastricht2027
QUOTE TIM

*Save 10% discount applies to André Rieu's tour packages booked by September 30, 2026 and cannot be applied retrospectively to bookings already confirmed. Offer applies to select tours only and cannot be combined with any other offer. Exclusions apply. Prices shown include discount. Single supplements apply. Prices correct at time of print. Subject to availability and maybe withdrawn at any time. These holidays are organised and operated by Newmarket Holidays Ltd, a company wholly independent of News UK. ABTOT 5509. ATOL protected 2325. ABTA V7812. Standard phone charges apply.

Our trusted partner Newmarket HOLIDAYS | ABTOT Member 5509 | ABTA travel with confidence

Register

Obituaries

Mike Slade

Property grandee who transformed the City and broke ocean racing records

When Mike Slade set up his first property company at the age of 26 he named it Grande Vista. That might seem immodest, but it captured the essence of a man who never saw obstacles in any of the fields in which he excelled.

Slade would go on to become one of London's last great property grandees at the helm of Helical Bar for 35 years, putting his stamp on the City and the West End with a portfolio of developments that made him and his shareholders handsome profits.

Slade was more than a property entrepreneur, however. A man of imposing physical presence, he was an effervescent and charismatic individual who was effective as a fundraiser and philanthropist. He was also a first-class racing yachtsman who owned a succession of the biggest racing machines in British sailing during the 1990s and early 2000s.

Slade's infectious sense of fun pervaded everything he did. He called everyone "darling" regardless of gender and had that knack of fixing whoever he was talking to with his eye, making them feel that they were the most important person in his world at that moment.

Helical Bar originally manufactured steel reinforcement rods for the construction industry but Slade, with the help of his friend and future Helical finance director Nigel McNair Scott (obituary, April 11 2023), reversed his property business into it in 1984. Becoming Helical's chief executive, Slade never looked back as the company prospered in the deregulated environment after the Big Bang.

One of his first marquee developments was the Pentagon building on Chiswell Street in the City which Slade pre-let to BP, sending Helical's share price into the stratosphere. He survived the big property crash in 1989, largely as a result of a shrewd investment in an industrial park in Co Durham that kept the company afloat, and emerged in good shape at a time when many smaller property companies went bust.

By the early 2000s Helical had completed a string of profitable developments in London and elsewhere, among them 33 Old Broad Street, which was let to what was then the Halifax Building Society; 3 Bunhill Row, pre-let to Linklaters and Alliance and forward-sold to Matrix Securities; and 40 Berkeley Square developed in partnership with owner Morley Fund Management and let to the Blackstone Group and the Multiplex Group among others.

Slade was effective at putting deals together and then setting his team, led by Mike Brown and Gerald Kaye, to work. As one former colleague recalled: "Mike provided the platform for the team to do the deals — he had a good feel for the market and he was good at getting people together."

Charles Ingleby of the City property adviser Ingleby Trice, said: "Mike was unbelievably charming and he could read things very well — he was very good at reading the market and calling it," said Ingleby. "But he was particularly good at keeping the share price up. He was a brilliant salesman."

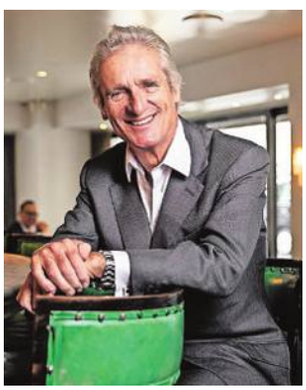
Slade himself, who used to say he was driven by fomo — his fear of missing out — spoke of his understanding of the market as an instinctive thing. "The top of the market is an innate feeling you get when it's a bit hairy. It's in your tummy at four in the morning when you're trying to sleep. It's something that you don't analyse, it just comes to you," he said.

Michael Eric Slade was born in Port Isaac in Cornwall in 1946, the younger of two sons of Kenneth and Elizabeth Slade, who was always known as Bets. His father ran a business making mining machinery. The family moved to London while Slade was still a boy. He attended Edinburgh House prep school at New Milton in Hampshire and then Sherborne School, where he was head boy and was a keen cricketer, boxer and cross-country runner.

It was during a family holiday to the Bahamas that Slade decided his life was going to be in property, telling the Estates Gazette in 2011: "That's where I got the spark. I thought this is bloody marvellous: land!" It was in the Bahamas that he got his first taste of the business when still in his teens selling homes to tourists.

Slade attended the College of Estate Management and then worked as a trainee surveyor in Aylesbury in the 1960s before forming Grande Vista, a joint venture with Equity & Law Life in 1972 to develop commercial buildings in France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Slade remained as chief executive of Helical until 2016, the year it dropped



Slade was a larger than life character

the "Bar" from its name, having steered the company through the financial crisis and having moved its focus from early investments in the Thames Valley and regional developments to the City of London and the technology district around Old Street. He finally left the board in 2019, a departure that was marked by a boisterous champagne reception at Claridge's.

Sailing had been a passion for Slade since his early childhood in Cornwall when he and his father went out in a small dinghy and managed to crash into almost every boat in the harbour. By the age of nine he was sailing his own racing boat on the Camel estuary. A serious car accident at the age of 22 forced a long period of recuperation after spinal surgery before Slade eventually returned to the sport in his early thirties.

He progressed from small racing yachts to ever larger ones and eventually owned a series of big cruising and racing yachts. The best known one was probably the final one — Leopard 3, a 100ft super-maxi, with a mast towering 154ft, which was designed by the leading naval architect Bruce Farr and built in Australia. Like Slade's big yachts before her, Leopard 3 broke numerous records and took line honours in almost every race it was entered into.

With his inexhaustible energy, and irreverence — Slade was a creature of the pre-woke age — he could talk money out of anyone and raised millions for charities.

One business associate recalled receiving a substantial payment from Slade's company for work done and immediately receiving a call from the Helical chief executive. Slade pointed out what a large sum of money it was and how lovely it would be if some of it could go to one of Slade's preferred charitable

He would refer to everyone as 'darling', regardless of gender

causes. "It was impossible to turn him down," said the person involved.

Slade's great passion was LandAid, the property industry's charity dedicated to tackling youth homelessness. Slade became its president in 1986 and super-charged it, raising about £20 million during his tenure, including £2 million of his own money. He also donated a further £1 million to LandAid House in north London that provides support and accommodation for young people.

Slade was happy to do whatever was necessary to help raise the profile of his charitable work, turning up to receptions dressed as Buzz Lightyear, or singing in fancy dress at Party Near The Park with the Helicalettes. He also raised significant sums for the British Heart Foundation, the Purley Park Trust, which supports adults with learning disabilities and where his brother John has been a resident since 1965, Sherborne School and Wellington College. In sailing he supported the Tall Ships Youth Trust and the RNLI.

His most spectacular charitable endeavour was what he did for the Royal Marsden Hospital in London. In 2017 Slade became chairman of its appeal to build the Oak Cancer Centre at The Royal Marsden in Sutton. He quickly surpassed the initial target of £50 million, eventually raising £70 million, which allowed for an additional floor dedicated to rapid diagnostics. Slade was appointed OBE for services to charity in 2019.

He married Heather Davenport in 1972 and she survives him. They had three children. Kate is a children's author; Hugo is a surveyor who ran a property investment and developing agency in Myanmar; and Max works for a renewable energy developer on battery storage. At the Claridge's reception marking his retirement, Slade thanked Heather for 46 years of marriage. "Forty-seven," she corrected him from the audience. "I'm always the under-bidder," he replied.

Mike Slade OBE, property developer, philanthropist and sailor, was born on August 13, 1946. He died from complications of Alzheimer's on September 2, 2026, aged 80

Zale Parry

Diver whose record feats landed her in Hollywood where she took LSD for a psychiatrist's research

One Sunday afternoon in August 1954, Zane Parry and several other divers set out from Catalina Island off the Los Angeles coastline to test a newly invented underwater safety mouthpiece. Under the watchful eye of the coastguard, when they were three miles out to sea Parry jumped in and headed for the ocean floor. Wearing long khaki underwear, a swimsuit and three sweaters under her rubberised wet suit to keep warm, she kept going until she reached the bottom, 209ft below sea level. "Depth diving was getting popular with the new gear and the guts of divers to explore the sea deeper and deeper," she said. But setting a record was not the purpose of her dive.

And yet set a women's international depth record she did, beating the previously logged best by 24ft. She wrote her name in the sand "just in case nobody believed me and someone wanted to come down and check" and took her time getting back to the surface, moving deliberately slowly to avoid the decompression sickness known to divers as the bends.

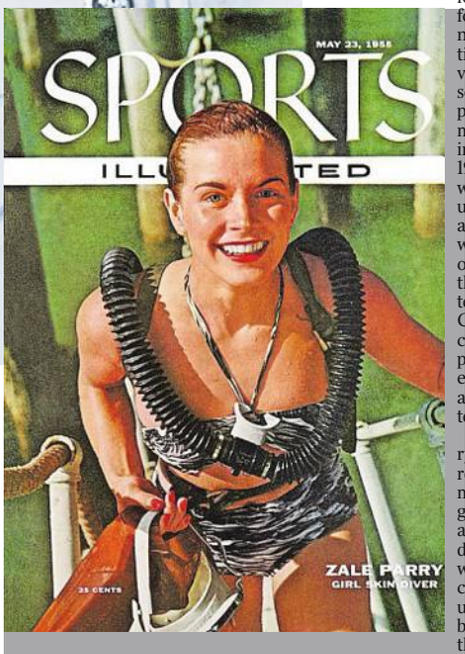
When she finally resurfaced, she had been under the water for a total of 23 minutes. "I had a big satisfied grin on my face, and a laugh and a wave for everyone," she recalled. "The dive had gone off like clockwork, the mouthpiece worked like a charm and a new record was set."

The dive changed her life. Radio, television, newspapers and magazines demanded interviews, and Groucho Marx invited her on his TV game show *You Bet Your Life*. "It must take a lot of courage to go down that deep," he told her. "I get panicky when the barber puts my head in the sink for a shampoo."

Overnight she had become the face of the new recreational sport of scuba diving or "Zale Parry, Girl Skin Diver" as Sports Illustrated called her when the magazine put her on its cover in her swimsuit. "Nobody helps her put her diving gear on although every male in sight is eager to do just that. No dive is out of her range," the magazine gushed. Parry had no problem with the sexist argot of the age. "The story was ripe and the photography of girl in a scanty

'It's a miracle we had a second date'
Marriages and engagements
Page 80

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED/GETTY IMAGES



Parry with her diving equipment and pet owl, Spooks, in 1958; right, on the cover of Sports Illustrated in 1955, which drew attention to scuba diving

Davina Sheffield

Ex-girlfriend of Charles whose chances of being queen were stymied because she was not a virgin

The summer of 1974 was not a memorably hot or steamy one. Brian Clough took charge at Leeds United, the BBC launched its Ceefax teletext service and Harold Wilson prepared to announce a second general election for October that year. Meanwhile, press speculation was heating up over who would make a suitable wife for the heir to the throne. Charles had set himself a deadline to marry before the age of 30 and, approaching his 26th birthday, there may have been many potential candidates but no one seemed a certain bet.

On the last Sunday of August royal watchers noticed a young, statuesque blonde figure with a beautiful smile leaving Crathie church, near Balmoral, after morning worship with members of the royal family. Villagers had been expecting to see Lady Jane Wellesley, daughter of the Duke of Wellington, who had featured in previous royal romance speculation, but there had been a changing of the guard. Instead, they were greeted by Davina Sheffield, a beautiful former debutante and arguably the best-looking of all the so-called "Charlie's angels", girlfriends of the future King.

Sheffield had arrived at Balmoral with Nicholas Soames, a grandson of Winston Churchill. Later the pair were seen leaving Aberdeen airport with Charles, heading to Teesside for a day's shooting with a wealthy North Yorkshire farmer. Although Buckingham Palace rejected any suggestions of romance as "silly", she was soon regularly seen in public with the prince. They attended a wedding, were photographed at an equestrian event with Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip and roared around the countryside in Charles's open-top Aston Martin DB5 Volante. She sat with the Queen to watch Charles play polo and even earned the approval of the Queen Mother.

"She seemed ideal in so many ways, and they appeared to be very much in love," Penny Junor, the royal biographer, said. Michael Rhodes, a royal expert, described Sheffield as "exactly the sort of glamorous, blue-blooded girlfriend Prince Charles was after", while another royal commentator described her as the "soulmate he was searching for".

Soon the press was full of wedding speculation, not least because Sheffield had been helping the heir to the throne come to terms with the heartbreak caused by the marriage of Camilla, his great love and future wife, to Andrew Parker Bowles the previous year. Front-page stories in October 1976 declared that "Charles would announce his engagement either tonight or tomorrow" to Sheffield, amid reports that 15 members of Buckingham Palace staff had been hurriedly flown to Holyrood House in Edinburgh, where he was staying at the time. They proved to be wrong.

Alas for both Sheffield and Charles, their relationship came to an abrupt end when her former boyfriend James Beard, a powerboat racer and old Harrovian, was tracked down by the News of the World. Misguidedly thinking he was speaking off the record, Beard disclosed that for six months he and Sheffield had been constant companions, sharing his 18th-century thatched cottage near Winchester where they "enjoyed a 'full sexual relationship'".

According to Gyles Brandreth in *Charles & Camilla: Portrait of a Marriage* (2005), the interview sealed her fate. As Junor put it, Beard's revelations "killed the relationship dead". The social mores of the time meant that, not being a virgin, Sheffield could no longer be considered a potential match for the future King.

Davina Mary Sheffield was born in 1951, the daughter of George Sheffield, an army officer, and his wife, Agnes (née McGowan), who was murdered by two mentally ill men in a robbery at her home in March 1976. Her maternal grandfather, Lord McGowan, was a Scottish industrialist who spent 20 years as chairman of the forerunner to ICI, and she was a cousin of Samantha Cameron, wife of the former prime minister David Cameron.

Sheffield did the standard round of society parties and dances. However, she was proudly independent and by her early twenties was working in a dress shop.

An ex-boyfriend's 'off the record' disclosures appeared in the press

Junor wrote in *The Firm* (2005) that Sheffield at first resisted joining Charles for a dinner date because of her romance with Beard, with whom she had recently enjoyed a holiday at Cap Ferrat. But Charles "was so persistent that she eventually succumbed and the boyfriend soon fell by the wayside", she added.

After their separation Sheffield largely disappeared from the public eye, emerging briefly with Soames at the 1979 general election when he fought the Dunbartonshire Central constituency, although he refused to be photographed with her. In December 1981, five months after Charles married Lady Diana Spencer, Sheffield married Jonathan "Jake" Morley, a Cambridge-educated commodity broker with two children, Dominic and Sebastian, from a previous marriage. They lived in North Yorkshire. He died in 2022 and she is survived by their three sons. Like Charles and Diana, she named two of them William and Henry; the eldest is Thomas.

Davina Sheffield, former girlfriend of the King, was born on March 1, 1951. She died from undisclosed causes on September 2, 2026, aged 75

Email: obituaries@thetimes.co.uk

bathing suit was a good draw," she said. Within no time Hollywood had come calling. She took acting classes with James Cagney's wife and brother-in-law as her coaches and became the go-to actress for just about every movie and television production that had a diving or aquatic theme. "When liquid dramas come along, I'm in business," she said.

And with the advances in underwater camera techniques — in which Parry also played a part as co-founder of the Underwater Photographic Society — there was a rapid growth of interest in "liquid dramas" in the 1950s. On TV she featured in almost 80 episodes of the *Kingdom of the Sea* documentary series. In the action-adventure series *Sea Hunt*, which she called "an underwater western", she played a damsel in distress who was often rescued by the fictional coastguard Mike Nelson played by Lloyd Bridges. In real life it was more likely to be the other way around; it was Parry who taught Bridges the techniques of scuba diving and while she did all her own stunts, he used a double.

She also appeared on TV in *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and in the 1958 film *Underwater Warrior*, and when she wasn't starring in her own films she doubled for others, including Sophia Loren in her 1957 English-language debut in *Boy on a Dolphin*. The film required Loren's character to dive 22ft underwater while holding her breath, which was nothing to Parry.

Back above water, the film featured Loren in the famous wet see-through dress that catapulted her to international stardom. Parry wasn't required to double for that scene, although she had the looks and figure to do so had she been asked.

What few knew at the time was that alongside her underwater adventures Parry was tripping on acid as part of a group of guinea pigs that also included Cary Grant, Jack Nicholson and Dennis Hopper in an LSD study conducted by Oscar Janiger, a Los Angeles psychiatrist researching the potential healing properties of psychotropic drugs.

Parry took two dozen trips, which she described as joyful and credited them with enhancing her appreciation of the beauty of "the underwater world" she loved. Under the influence she produced a number of paintings that portrayed her psychedelic visions. She also volunteered to babysit other participants in case they had bad trips but was disturbed when the drug found its way outside clinical trials and was adopted by the 1960s counterculture. "It was a classic example of how a meaningful cure turned into the horrors of abuse and misuse," she said.

Rosalia Parry was born in 1933, in Milwaukee, the daughter of Genevieve (née Czarnecki) and Eugene Parry, a bookkeeper by profession who in his youth had been a track and field athlete

Parry was a double for Sophia Loren in the film Boy on a Dolphin

who made the US Olympic team. She took to the water almost before she could walk. "As one of seven children, it was a case of swim or be perpetually dunked by your older brothers and sisters, and by the time I was eight I was skin diving without a face mask or fins."

At 14, she joined a travelling "aqua follies" show, performing in synchronised swimming routines during school vacations. Yet there seemed no career opportunities in swimming and after moving to California in 1951, she took a job with the aircraft manufacturer Douglas as a stenographer. There was no keeping her out of the water, though. She volunteered to teach Red Cross water safety classes, helped polio patients with aquatic exercises and became a certified underwater instructor.

In 1953 she met Parry Bivens, a medical researcher whom she married in 1955. Together they launched a company testing underwater equipment which enjoyed little commercial success until her record-breaking dive put them on the map. On her husband's death in 1963 she married Robert Neuman, a pilot. The marriage ended in divorce and she is survived by a daughter, Margaret Bivens.

In later years she wrote a history of scuba diving and became involved in marine conservation, which in 2006 led to the Academy of Underwater Arts & Sciences establishing a scholarship in her name to support students pursuing careers in undersea exploration and conservation.

"Aquatics is my life and I never get tired," she informed an interviewer when she was at the height of her diving fame. "At the end of the day, I'm rested and refreshed from being in the sea, and I feel bathed and clean. I'm following my bliss."

Zale Parry, the queen of scuba diving, was born on March 19, 1933. She died of natural causes on July 20, 2026, aged 93

Readers' lives

Marriages and engagements

'It's a miracle we had a second date'

Jaz Jameson-Allen, 30, an assistant manager at an accountancy firm, and **Harry Newell**, 31, a senior health and safety adviser at Selfridges, were married on July 11, 2026, at St Paul's Cathedral in London

Jaz and Harry married at St Paul's Cathedral after her father was appointed MBE

Jaz and Harry's first date was so awkward that they are amazed they made it to a second. "We were both a bit nervous," she says. "We were speaking way too much and absolute rubbish. It's a miracle we went on another date."

They met while working at a branch of Booths, the high-end supermarket, in Ripon, North Yorkshire. Jaz, who was on the shopfloor, had graduated in economics from Newcastle University and was working out what to do next. Harry, a team leader, had left Manchester Metropolitan University a few years earlier with a degree in microbiology and molecular biology.

At 6ft 5in, Harry stood out. Jaz's manager had to keep reminding her to ask him if she did not know something rather than always approach Harry. Harry asked her on a date, which he claims happened to be on Valentine's Day 2020. Their first and second dates were at a local bar. Their third was at a restaurant in Harrogate just before the start of the pandemic. As key workers they held on to their jobs and continued to see one another daily.

Jaz and Harry were each living with their parents but, that September, moved into an unfurnished rented flat overlooking Booths. Harry, who is the fifth of seven children, enjoys cooking and baking. He taught himself to blacksmith via YouTube videos. Jaz tried her hand and made a leaf-shaped key ring. She took up powerlifting in 2018 — she can bench press 60kg — and competed in the British Junior Championships. "We are both quite easygoing and relaxed," he says.

"Harry makes me laugh every day," says Jaz. "He is so kind, caring and spontaneous, yet so thoughtful and considerate in everything he does." He also appreciates her caring nature. "She is one of the funniest and most compassionate people I've ever met," he says. "I love how even in the toughest situations we are always laughing together."

The couple got engaged on their first anniversary in 2021. Harry chose a ring and only told his friend, Andrew, whom he met working at Booths. Andrew suggested Harry speak to Jaz's father and was a bit disconcerted when Jaz's father ended their conversation saying: "If she says 'no', it doesn't necessarily mean 'no' for ever." After a snowy walk, the couple sat down for a candlelit tomahawk steak and doughnuts for a Valentine's dinner at home, and Harry went down on one knee. "It just felt right," says Jaz.

Jaz and Harry found a rural, rustic venue outside York, where their guests could camp, but then the venue folded, which left them feeling a bit fed up.

That summer, Jaz got a job with an accountancy firm in Manchester and together they began to rent a flat in Salford. Harry retrained in health and safety, and found employment with a housing and social care provider.

In 2022 Jaz's father, Tony, was appointed MBE as co-founder of a national charity, Sporting Memories Network, helping older people connect and reminisce through sport. It meant that his daughters could marry at St Paul's Cathedral. "How do you say 'no' to St Paul's?" says Harry. He and Jaz went on the waiting list and were given a date for last July.

In 2024 they moved to London through Jaz's job and Harry now works for Selfridges in the capital. They rent a flat in West Hampstead and enjoy walking on the heath. They wanted an informal setting for the reception and chose Pedro's Wine Bar in Bermondsey. They invited 110 guests. Jaz chose her wedding dress with her mother and younger sister, Meg, who was her maid of honour.

Jaz and her five bridesmaids stayed at a hotel near St Paul's on the eve of the wedding. Harry travelled by Tube from home with his groomsmen for the 2pm ceremony in the Chapel of the Order of the British Empire in the Crypt. Jaz walked in with her father to a choir singing Vivaldi's *Gloria*. Harry's eldest sister, Emma, read a poem, *My Someone*, which begins: "There comes a time in life when when you come across a person that is a deep breath personified."

Jonathan, a friend of Jaz's from university, read Colossians iii, 12-17: "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience."

Guests boarded a red double-decker bus for a tour of London, with Pimm's and paper fans to combat the heat, before arriving at Pedro's for sharing platters of Portuguese food. The newlyweds' first dance was to London Grammar's cover of *Baby It's You*. Jaz and Harry had not planned a honeymoon but, a week before the wedding, she won an award at work, which paid for a three-night, all-inclusive trip to Ibiza.

If you would like to feature a wedding or engagement or the birth of a child on these pages, call 020 7782 5583, Mon-Fri, to discuss the content and cost, or email: readerslives@thetimes.co.uk

thetimes.co.uk/static/terms-and-conditions

The perfect wedding gift

Mark an unforgettable day with a feature in Readers' Lives, a service in contracted tributes

Call 020 7782 5583 or email readerslives@thetimes.co.uk

50% discount for subscribers

'It felt like I was floating on a cloud'

Jodi Shurey, 30, and Dan Tostevin, 31, were married on October 27, 2024, on the outskirts of Edinburgh. They featured in The Times on Saturday April 12, 2025

THE TIMES

Jews and Christians share the Bible but subtle editing is key

Credo
Jonathan Romain

Those who remember the *Batman* television series will know that it always used to end with leading questions such as "Will Batman rescue Robin? Will the Joker take over Gotham City?" — urging us to watch the next thrilling instalment.

The Hebrew Bible does the same, with its final verse looking ahead to what comes next. However, readers beware! Much depends on which version of the Bible you are reading, with the order of the books varying greatly.

In Jewish editions, the last book is II Chronicles, a somewhat drier version of the Book of Kings, written during the period of exile, and not as often read or quoted.

However, it ends with the emphatic declaration about rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem and commanding Jews to return to the land of Israel.

In contrast, Christian versions end with the Book of Malachi, which speaks of the reappearance of Elijah and heralds the coming of "the great and terrible day of the Lord".

This can be seen as a clear reference to the role of John the Baptist, described in Matthew as the destined Elijah, along with the cataclysmic events that would occur on the death of Jesus, including earthquakes, the sun being blotted out and the temple curtain being torn in two.

The editors of the Old Testament knew what they were doing — the Jewish order of the books promoting the renewal of the Jewish people, and the Christian one prophesying the New Testament. Is this an early example of religious propaganda, or the will of God becoming evident through human hands?

The same question can be asked over the way in which the narratives within each book are broken up. The chapter divisions were not in the original Hebrew text and may not have been introduced until as late as the 13th century by the Archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton and with a distinctive Christian slant.

The second chapter of Genesis, for instance, splits the seventh day of Creation from the other six, making it easier to be invested with a new meaning and changed from a Saturday to a Sunday. The Jewish break in the text (known as a Petuchot, a gap the space of nine letters, and visible in texts going back to the 1st century) starts at ii, 4 and keeps the seven days as a unit.

Even more pointed is where the third chapter occurs, highlighting the serpent and the Fall, thus emphasising the need for salvation, whereas the Jewish text has no break there.

The placement of the fourth chapter also makes a theological point, putting a spotlight on the first recorded sex act, which became associated with sin in Christian teaching. The Jewish break comes slightly earlier, in iii, 22, where God expels Adam and Eve from Eden and does not carry any sexual overtones.

Given the differences in the order of the biblical books and the chapter divisions, it means that it is not entirely true to hold, as is commonly claimed, that Jews and Christians share the same scripture. Instead, it would be better to say we have slightly variant versions of the same text.

This will certainly come as a surprise to many Jews, especially this weekend, which is Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, a time not of parties and champagne but of solemn gathering in synagogue.

It is a moment for reflecting on one's merits and faults during the previous 12 months and making resolutions for improvement in the coming ones. It includes readings from the Bible but, curiously, using the Christian chapter divisions.

The reason is simple: they proved so useful for cross-referencing texts that it became unthinkable not to employ them, and they were adopted when Hebrew Bibles were printed in the early 16th century.

Another aspect of the Bible that many Jews may not realise, is how often they inadvertently quote in everyday speech phrases from the New Testament, a book they probably have never read, but which is the source for so many idioms.

This applies if they describe someone as the "salt of the earth" (Matthew v, 13), suggest another person is a "wolf in sheep's clothing" (Matthew vii, 15) or reckon a place is just "a stone's throw" away (Luke xxii, 41).

Ignorance of the Bible's influence on modern speech applies equally to the wider public when quoting Hebrew terms without realising their origins.

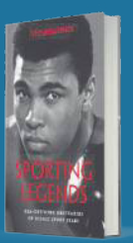
They may not "see eye to eye" with someone (Isaiah lii, 8), regard them as having "feet of clay" (Daniel ii, 33) and wish they would "bite the dust" (Psalm lxxii, 9), but consider another person as "a man after my own heart" (I Samuel xiii, 14) or their own child as the "apple of my eye" (Deuteronomy xxxii, 10). These and countless other examples ("Can a leopard change his spots?" (Jeremiah xiii, 23), or "a drop in the bucket" (Isaiah xl, 15) show how the Bible has entered the consciousness of people unfamiliar with it.

Even those well versed biblically do not always realise the subtle religious editing that we have inherited via the order of the books and the chapter placements.

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain is convener of the Rabbinic Court of Great Britain

A new collection of Times obituaries

Now available from bookshops as well as amazon.co.uk and thetimes.co.uk/bookshop



Journey through the lives of the sporting greats

THE TIMES

Births, Marriages and Deaths

To book a Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register, visit: newsukadvertising.co.uk for help, please call 020 7782 7553 or email BMDs@thetimes.co.uk

WHOEVER has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5.12 (NIV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

FANE-GLADWIN on 11th August 2026 to Bea and William, a son, Albert Alexander Darwin.

MCFARLAN on 5th September 2026 to Isabel (née Fitzalan Howard) and Donald, a son, Donald Edward Miles.

WILSON
On 1st September 2026 to Hayley Black and Marvin, a son, Eddie James, brother to Lennie. Thank you to all concerned at West Cumberland Hospital. Looking forward to the wedding!

WOOLNOUGH on 27th July 2026 to Eleanor (née Reed) and Alexander, a son, Barnaby William Arthur, brother to Wilbur.

Forthcoming Marriages

MISS P. M. A. MITCHELL AND MR S. AHMED
The engagement is announced between Poppy, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Martin Mitchell of Laxfield, Suffolk, and Suleiman, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Pervaze Ahmed of Chiswick, London.

MR C. J. VILIM AND MISS G. G. BAKER
The engagement is announced between Carter, elder son of Mr and Mrs Glen Vilim of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, USA, and Gabriella Grace, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs John Baker of Clavering, Essex.

CAPT C. E. T. BROWN AND MISS M. I. N. BUNKER
The engagement is announced between Captain Kit Brown (Ret'd), son of Mr Edward Brown KC and Mrs Brown of Alvediston, Wiltshire, and Tilly, younger daughter of Professor Chris and Dr Anna Bunker of Hampstead, London.

MR H. D. W. SOUTH AND MISS E. A. M. DUNNE
The engagement is announced between Henry, younger son of Mr David and the late Mrs South of Oughterside, Cumbria, and Evie, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Philip Dunne of Leinthall Earls, Herefordshire.

MR J. C. O. ROBERTSON-MACLEOD AND MISS C. F. P. GREENWOOD
The engagement is announced between Jamie, younger son of Mr and Mrs Simon Robertson-Macleod of London, and Camilla, daughter of the late Mr Hamilton P Greenwood and of Mrs Hamilton P Greenwood of Whitsbury, Hampshire.

MR E. R. DANIELL AND MISS H. S. HIPWELL
The engagement is announced between Edward, youngest son of the late Mr Anthony Daniell and Mrs Sarah Daniell of Shaftesbury, Dorset, and Harriet, daughter of Mr Simon Hipwell of Bridport, Dorset, and Mrs Katharine Hipwell of Hungerford, Berkshire.

MISS J. A. SALMON AND MR S. T. G. STRATTON-MORRIS
The engagement is announced between Jemima, daughter of Sally and Andrew Salmon of London, and Sam, son of Tania and Will Stratton-Morris of Shrewsbury.

Marriages

MR M. S. T. CURTIS AND MISS E. H. G. SMART
The marriage took place on 5th September 2026, at St John the Baptist Church, Lound, Suffolk, between Matthew, son of Timothy and Diane Curtis, and Eleanor, daughter of Malcolm and Kristen Smart.

Deaths

BALLINGER Camilla Mary Susan on 15th August, at home in Ely, aged 64. Beloved daughter, sister, aunt. Memorial at 1.45pm on Saturday 28th November at Poets House, 40-44 St Mary's Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire. Donations to Samaritans.

FEARFIELD Natasha (née Gardner) died peacefully on 4th September 2026, aged 96. A private funeral will be held in Stockholm.

HOLLIS Major Anthony James Eric CBE passed away peacefully, after a short illness, on 25th August 2026, aged 89. Dearly loved husband of Elizabeth, devoted father to Amanda, Philip and Charlotte, and proud grandfather of nine. A life of adventure, achievement and love. Aldershot Crematorium, 3pm, 22nd September. Family Flowers only.

HOWELL Peter Adrian on 15th August 2026, aged 85. Died peacefully at home. Funeral Mass at Westminster Cathedral on 23rd September 2026 at 10.30am. If desired donations to Westminster Cathedral or Aid to the Church in Need. No flowers.

LURY Anne died peacefully on 27th August 2026, aged 55. Much-loved mother of Laura and Matthew Mace. Memorial service on Thursday 8th October 2026 at 1pm, All Saints' Church, Putney Common, London, SW15 1HL. Donations, if desired, to The Royal Marsden via justgiving.com/page/annelury

SANDERSON Peter Bryan died peacefully on 17th August 2026, aged 80. Beloved husband of Liz, father to Bertie and grandfather to Tilly and Max. A private family funeral has taken place.

SHEEHAN Terence Francis, lately of Oaklands House and formerly of Culvercliff Walk, Manchester, died peacefully on 26th August 2026, in Lady of the Vale nursing home. Funeral service at Altrincham Crematorium on Wednesday 23rd September at 11.30am. Donations to Parkinson's UK. Inquiries to Herbert Murray Funeral Directors, 29 Green Lane, Sale, M33 5PN, 0161 962 3456.

SPRATT Ruth Ellen (née Warr), born 1928, passed away on 6th September 2026. Remembered with love by Diana, Graham, Timothy and Peter, and by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Celebration of Life

ANTHONY WESTNEDGE OBE
Gathering in celebration of Anthony's life on 21st September 2026, 6pm-8.30pm at the Caledonian Club, 9 Halkin St, London SW1X 7DR. If you plan to attend please email asw.obe@outlook.com

Court Circular

Balmoral Castle
11th September, 2026
The King this morning received Professor Robert Miller (Chairman in Aerothermal Technology, Director of the Whittle Laboratory, University of Cambridge).

Kensington Palace
11th September, 2026
The Prince of Wales, Founder and President, the Earthshot Prize, this morning spoke via video link to Build Up Nepal, a 2024 Earthshot Prize finalist, in response to the recent natural disaster on the Nepal-China border.

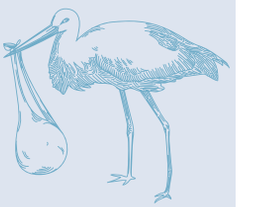
The Princess of Wales, Joint Patron, the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, this morning visited the Royal Marsden Hospital, 203 Fulham Road, London SW3.

St James's Palace
11th September, 2026
The Princess Royal, Patron, International Sheep Dog Society, this afternoon attended the International Sheep Dog Trials at Daylesford Farm and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire (Mrs Marjorie Glasgow).

Kensington Palace
11th September, 2026
The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, representing The King, this morning witnessed a Special Tribute at Guard Mounting on the Forecourt of Buckingham Palace to mark the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

The Ambassador of the United States of America (His Excellency Mr Warren Stephens) was present.

The simple way to place your Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register. Available 24 hours a day. Go to: newsukadvertising.co.uk



Legal Notices

MISSING FREEHOLDER
The freeholder of 55A Dongola Road, Tottenham N17 6EB ('the Property'), namely ANGOR ALI cannot be found. The leaseholders intend to exercise their statutory right to a lease extension of their flat in the Property under the Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993. If anyone has any information on the whereabouts of ANGOR ALI (previously of 55 Dongola Road, Tottenham N17 6EB) please urgently contact Sarah Jennings of Comptons Solicitors of 90-92 Parkway, London, NW1 7AN, (e-sarah@comptons.co.uk). Failure to make contact will result in the issue of legal proceedings.

Trustee Acts

NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to S27 of the Trustee Act, 1925 that any person having a Claim against or an Interest in the Estate of any of the deceased persons whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified; after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had a notice.
Stone, James. Late of 90 Newbridge Road, Bath, BA1 3LB, who died on 28th December 2025 particulars to Helen Starkie Solicitor, 38 Gay Street, Bath, BA1 2NT by 13th November 2026.

NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to S27 of the Trustee Act, 1925 that any person having a Claim against or an Interest in the Estate of any of the deceased persons whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified; after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had a notice.
Christopher, Lord Anthony Martin Grosvenor. Late of Beechwood House, Nethern Court Road, Woldingham, Catherham, Surrey, CR3 7EF, who died on 12th July 2026 particulars to Helen Starkie Solicitor, 38 Gay Street, Bath, BA1 2NT by 13th November 2026.

NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to S27 of the Trustee Act, 1925 that any person having a Claim against or an Interest in the Estate of any of the deceased persons whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified; after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had a notice.
Wilson, Mary Elizabeth. Late of 11 Melfort Road, Newport, NP29 3FS , who died on 20th of August 2025 particulars to Helen Starkie Solicitor, 38 Gay Street, Bath, BA1 2NT by 13th November 2026.

HSL

Feel Good Furniture Experts **since 1968**

Clever Comfort™ BY HSL

Designed to ensure key areas of your body are fully supported to improve your overall posture, wellbeing and reduce pain.

Sizes to Fit You

Get your FREE Exclusive Chair Fitting in-store today.

Approved by an Occupational Therapist

Bicester Riser Recliner in Wolseley Red

Was from ~~£2,095~~

NOW FROM **£995***

SPEND & SAVE

£100 off when you spend over £1,000†

Quote: **THTSep_£100** Only on full priced products. Valid until 31.10.26. T&C's apply.

£300 off when you spend over £2,500†

Quote: **THTSep_£300** Only on full priced products. Valid until 31.10.26. T&C's apply.

£500 off when you spend over £4,500†

Quote: **THTSep_£500** Only on full priced products. Valid until 31.10.26. T&C's apply.

Comfort for Christmas*

Selected products only. Ask in-store for details.

BACK CARE CHAIR FROM £495*

Buckingham Fireside Chair in Barreni Check Russet

SUPPORT SOFA FROM £1,395*

Bramham Posture Support Sofa in Tilton Laurel

SWIVELS FROM £699*

Hamilton Swivel Chair in Camilla Beige

£300 OFF ADJUSTABLE BEDS*

5ft Adjustable Bed in Sleadale Airforce

Find your local showroom, request a FREE brochure or book a FREE Home Demonstration

01924 486903 | hslchairs.com QUOTE: THT26

'Excellent' ★★★★★ Trustpilot from over 31,000 reviews

HANDMADE in BRITAIN

Showrooms

London / South East

Caterham-on-the-Hill CR3 5PE
Farnborough GU14 7PG
Hendon NW4 4UB
Henley-on-Thames RG9 1AG
Ipswich IP3 9QJ
Letchworth SG6 1LJ
Maidstone ME15 6RQ
Milton Keynes MK12 6HS
Norwich NR6 6EP
Orpington BR6 0JW
Oxford OX2 0HF
Rayleigh SS6 7LF
Romford RM11 1PZ
NEW - Lakeside/Thurrock RM20 1WN
Tolworth KT6 7BF
NEW - Tunbridge Wells TN2 3BF

South Coast

Brighton & Hove BN3 7BA
Poole/Bournemouth BH12 1DA
Southampton SO30 4FN
St. Leonards-on-Sea TN38 0DX

South West / Wales

Bath BA2 2RX
Bristol BS10 6PZ
Cardiff CF23 9XE
Cheltenham GL51 9RR
Exeter EX2 8NW
Plymouth PL7 4JN
Swindon SN3 4NS
Taunton TA1 5NF
Truro TR4 8HS

Midlands

Brierley Hill DY5 1AJ
Coventry CV3 2SB
Henley-in-Arden B95 5BA
Lichfield WS13 6UY
Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 9ED
Nottingham NG9 3JA
Peterborough PE2 7BX
Shrewsbury SY1 4NU
Solihull B90 3BL
Wellingborough NN8 2DP

North West

HSL at LIVHOME Aintree L9 5AN
Blackpool FY3 7AT
Burnley BB11 1LE
Chester CH1 4QG
Formby L37 4AQ
NEW - Preston PR1 4HZ
Prestwich M25 1AX
Stockport SK1 2BU
Warrington WA2 8TW

North East / Yorkshire

Dewsbury WF13 2DU
Guiseley LS20 8LZ
Hull HU6 7PL
Lincoln LN5 8QJ
Newcastle upon Tyne NE21 5ST
Rotherham S66 2TP
NEW - Stockton-on-Tees TS18 2SP
York YO30 4WZ

Scotland

Bathgate EH48 2AG
Glasgow G13 2TG
HSL at Sterling Home:
Edinburgh EH15 3HR
Glasgow G32 8XQ
Tillicoultry FK13 6NS

Northern Ireland

Newtownabbey BT36 7LS

Open 7 days a week

*Christmas delivery cut-off dates vary by product and may change. Ask in store for details. Save up to 50% on selected collections on orders placed between 1st September and 31st October 2026. Prices shown are for the smallest size chair or sofa in the fabric shown. Offers cannot be combined with any other promotion or applied retrospectively. †£100 voucher requires a minimum spend of £1,000; £300 voucher, £2,500; and £500 voucher, £4,500. Voucher offers are valid only during the promotional period, exclude Himolla, Stressless®, Giuseppe Nicoletti and ercol ranges, and cannot be used with seasonal savings or any other offer, or applied retrospectively. Discounts are correct at the time of printing and may change without notice. Eligible customers may purchase adjustable beds and riser recliners VAT-free, subject to a qualifying disability or chronic illness and completion of a VAT exemption declaration. Handmade in Britain excludes the Hamilton range. High Seat Limited, Units 1–3a Grange Road Industrial Estate, Grange Road, Batley, WF17 6LN.

The Times Saturday Quiz Olav Bjortomt

1 The *Star Trek* actress Nichelle Nichols became a recruiter for which US space agency?

2 Which McVitie's cakes feature a "tangy orangey bit in the middle"?

3 Which animals are depicted in Edward Hopper's 1939 painting *Bridle Path*?

4 Who wrote the sequel *The Second Jungle Book* (1895)?

5 What colour is the capitalised lettering on a UK stop sign?

6 Which fairytale character was named *Aschenputtel* by the Brothers Grimm?

7 At the behest of Winston Churchill, Fan Bay Battery was built in 1940-41 near which Kent port?

8 The Neptune Fountain in Cheltenham is thought to have been styled on which famous landmark in Rome?

9 In 1800, the ex-soldier James Hadfield attempted to shoot which king at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane?

10 Which 1967 No 1 single by the Bee Gees is named after a US state?

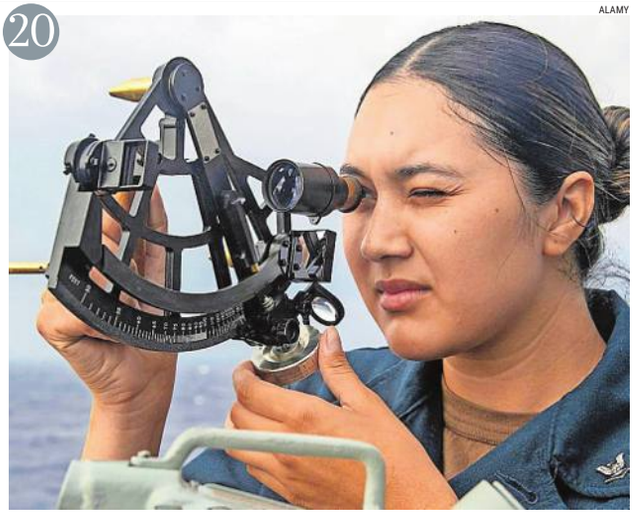
11 Diane Morgan plays a robot carer named Linda in which new BBC sitcom?

12 The Arctic archipelago of Svalbard is part of which Scandinavian country?

13 Which Italian carmaker recently unveiled the Grizzly and Grizzly Fastback SUVs?

20

ALAMY



14 Which trade union leader was general secretary of the TGWU from 1968 to 1978?

15 In 1950, Knightswood Hospital in Glasgow became the centre of a serious outbreak of which disease?

16 Which 2017 US TV series was named the best film of the 2010s by Cahiers du Cinéma?

17 *Rosa* (1958) is a bolero album by which Mexican composer and singer?

18 Which nickname of the darts player Keith Deller came from an advertising mascot, introduced in 1961?

19 In 2004, the first official women's T20 international cricket match was played between which two teams?

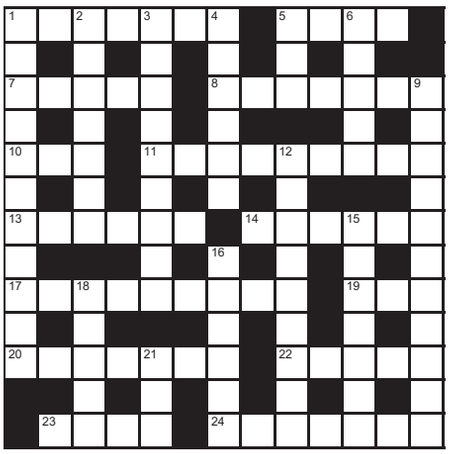
20 Which navigation instrument is pictured?

Answers below right

Last week's O Tempora! solution

O Tempora! Crossword DLXXI by Balatro

A weekly crossword for the classically minded



Clues, which may be straight or mildly cryptic, always lead to answers in Latin

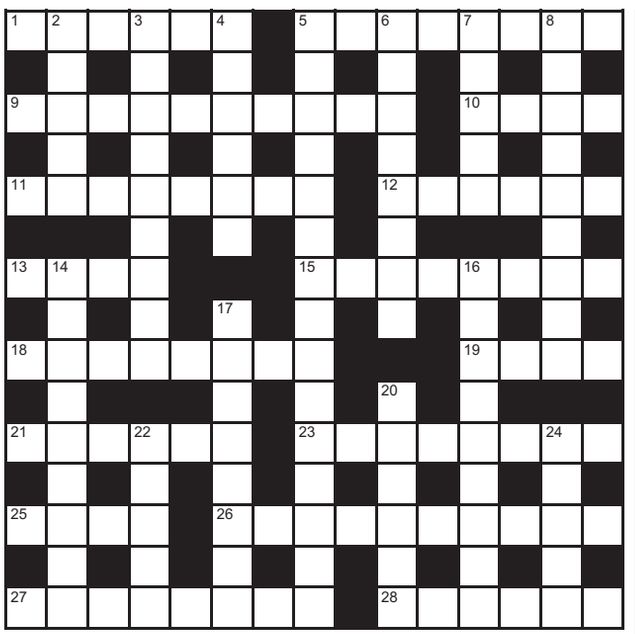
Across

1 Wearisomeness — molestia, fatigatio, insulsitas (7)
5 Futurum esse (4)
7 Gens Britannica cuius regina Boudicca erat (5)
8 Fortuito cum ares, gignitur uva (7)
10 Cucurri, me proripui, praecipitavi (3)
11 Balnearum cella ubi aqua calda suppeditatur (9)
13 In reality, actually (vide Cic. Amic. 47 — on carefreeness, blanda sed ___ multis locis repudianda) (6)
14 Ieiunus sum, comesse volo, fame laboro (6)
17 Princeps qui murum construendum inter Britannos et barbaros curavit (9)
19 Aciei mediam partem commove! (3)
20 On high, (vide DRN 6.97-98, concurrunt ___ volantes | aetheriae nubes) (7)
22 Mandatu in corde pius sum (5)
23 Graceful chap loses heart to become god (4)
24 Tardu' ___ noctes et dies, the dimwit snores night and day! (Ter. Eun. 1079) (7)

Down

1 Navis triplicibus remigiis aptae magister (11)
2 Augusta ___, colonia in Lusitania pro veteranis constituta (7)
3 Pilum ___ mihi, you threw a missile at me! (Pl. Most. 570) (9)
4 Una ex avibus quattuor et viginti in crusto coctis? (6)
5 Taeda decrescente, age! (3)
6 Frangi, dissolvi, destrui (5)
9 They removed — reppulerunt, seposuerunt, amoliti sunt (11)
12 ___ luco, stand away from the grove! (Aen. 6.259) (9)
15 Perturbatus se curat? Abnuit (7)
16 Duplex — sicut Ianus? (6)
18 Haud ___, without a doubt, unquestionably (5)
21 Right juice? (3)

Times Crossword No 29,646



A £20 Waterstones gift voucher will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened on Thursday. Enter by post to: Times Crossword No 29,646, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ, or by email to: prize@thetimes.co.uk, with "Crossword 29646" in the subject line. Open to 18+, UK & ROI residents only. Winners and solutions will appear on Monday week.

Name/Address.....

.....

.....

.....

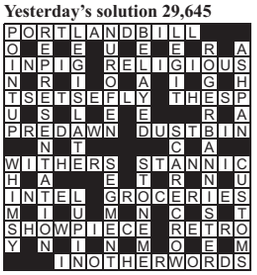
Across

1 Journal almost preserves deadlock (6)
5 Leave *Flower of Scotland* on TV (3,5)
9 Bird reportedly noses around wooden spoon? (5,5)
10 Piece of furniture from French king (4)
11 Always returning fee for letter, showing respect (8)
12 Bruce, perhaps, with custom rope? (6)
13 Prepare to fly with one on duty (4)
15 Retiring setter and chief editor given a raise? (8)
18 Doctor with a prayer for driving event (4,4)
19 One all in black possibly contracted by hospital (4)
21 Publicise band's drinking place (6)
23 Friend's reversing coach in course (8)
25 Thanks company for Mexican dish (4)
26 Rat grabbing a bit of sleep and plenty of food (6,4)
27 Manage instrument cases and the rest (3,5)
28 Kind offer (6)

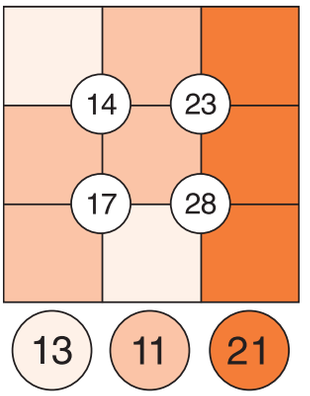
Down

2 Bit of atmosphere in old region (5)
3 Poke live circuit, making no sense at all (9)
4 Essential to warm up petulant fool (6)
5 Son bartering upset Windy City (5,10)
6 Beg hotel to move play area (3,5)
7 Record of the past? (5)
8 Will exam abruptly change time? (9)
14 American opening up road vehicle (9)
16 Maligns an awful line manager? (9)
17 Unit is second in manliness (8)
20 Red line brought up in vehicle rental (6)
22 Bouquet from first-class team in Italy (5)
24 University learned standard operation (5)

Yesterday's solution 29,645



Sakuro No 4845



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct.
Solution *MindGames in Saturday Review*

Quiz answers 1 Nasa 2 Jaffa Cakes 3 Horses 4 Rudyard Kipling 5 White 6 Cinderella 7 Dover 8 Trevi Fountain 9 George III 10 *Massachusetts* 11 *Ann Droid* 12 Norway 13 Fiat 14 Jack Jones 15 Smallpox 16 *Twin Peaks: The Return* or *Twin Peaks* season three 17 Agustín Lara 18 The Milky Bar Kid 19 England and New Zealand 20 Sextant.

Concise Quintagram answers 1 Yeats 2 Offend 3 Undergo 4 Netball 5 Gizzard.

LOUIS VUITTON

THE TIMES

Saturday September 12 2026

Caroline Quentin: I'm a midlife fresher!

Plus Dr Suzi Godson on post-wedding libido loss

Weekend

Travel starts on page 33

We can still fit into our clothes from 40 years ago

Alice Hart-Davis and Phil Hilton

Grow your own berries
Joe Swift's expert tips

20 best breaks in Sicily
Where to book for autumn

COVER: LEZLI AND ROSE/@DAILYMAIL; CHRISTOPHER L PROCTOR FOR THE TIMES. BELOW: CHRIS MCANDREW, MICHAEL LECKIE FOR THE TIMES. PHIL WEARS FAUX LEATHER TROUSERS, £32, ASOS.COM

Midlife middle

Our waists haven't changed since our 20s

Waist circumference is a strong predictor of longevity, say scientists. Two writers on how they maintain theirs

Alice Hart-Davis

'If I wanted to I could still wear the shiny PVC punk trousers I bought in 1978'

Phil Hilton, 62

At the risk of sounding smug, my waist is 30-31in. At 62 I could, if I wanted to, wear the shiny PVC trousers I bought from a punk-rock clothing shop in 1978. I would obviously look tragic, my wife would probably leave me and my kids disown me, but the trousers would fit. And research has found that fighting off fat around your middle could save your life as well as your wardrobe choices.

A study published last month in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society looked at 6,905 Americans aged 65 and over, and found that waist circumference was a strong predictor of longevity. This is important because our bodies are mostly measured using body mass index (weight cross-referenced with height). A high BMI is usually equated with poor health, but this work shows there is more to the story.

Lean meat and fibre help reduce fat

Bellies and body fat are fraught with politics, shame and judgment. One motivation for undertaking the research was to add subtlety to the idea that big is bad. Professor Bryan Blissmer from the University of Rhode Island worked on the research. He says: "Body weight and waist size carry considerable stigma, and health messages about them can easily become overly simplistic or judgmental. Our findings actually argue for greater nuance."

His study found that a higher BMI did not automatically mean greater mortality risk and a "normal" BMI did not automatically mean lower risk, particularly when someone had a large waist circumference.

In the 1990s I edited a health magazine for men, and our biggest-selling issues always carried some variation of the words: "Lose your gut!" The exclamation mark sounded like a drill sergeant or someone with exciting new information, depending on your mood.

However, Blissmer's study found that simply trying to shed fat and make yourself weigh less was not a recipe for a healthy old age. "For middle-aged and older adults the goal should not be weight loss at any cost. Preserving muscle, strength, mobility and adequate nutrition become increasingly important with age."

In fact, there is considerable evidence in the study supporting the "obesity paradox" — those with mild obesity do better than people with "normal" weight in later years. There are several possible explanations: body weight does not differentiate between fat and muscle or specify where the fat is stored, for example — factors that impact health as we age.

My relationship with my stomach has changed over the years. When I bought my Sid Vicious PVC drainpipes I may have been worried about meeting girls and bringing down "the system" but I was not worried about developing a belly. My teenage body was a pogoing, energy-burning machine.

Now I feel myself slowing down. Muscle is hard to hang on to, and my middle area always feels as if it wants to expand and start to hang over my belt. My goal is to keep my waist at 30-31in for as long as possible and, in the spirit of honesty, I'm thinking here about aesthetics more than health. I like to belt my (non-PVC) jeans, and a slim waist flatters the muscle I've worked so hard for on my chest and shoulders.

Lift weights, run, cycle

While I'm sharing, I'll admit that there is no six-pack under my T-shirt. I do not aspire to that. Unless you are genetically inclined to visible stomach muscles, a rack of abdominals requires body fat so low it needs many painful and unhealthy sacrifices.

If you are reading this and looking down at a paunch, it's worth knowing that losing it really could be worth the effort. Blissmer says: "High waist circumference was associated with a 24 per cent higher mortality risk in men and women after accounting for BMI."

What looks like a passive blob of fat could be actively damaging your health. "Visceral fat is biologically active and is associated with inflammation, insulin resistance, abnormal blood lipids and other processes that contribute to cardiovascular disease and diabetes," he says.

The key to keeping my body fat low enough that it doesn't start accumulating around my middle is food. It feels as though exercising your core will reduce your belly. Crunches, sit-ups and leg raises give you a sense of targeting flab around your stomach with a precision strike, but sadly this is an illusion.

Ellie Clark, a health and wellbeing physiologist at the healthcare charity Nuffield Health, says: "There is a common misconception that there are specific exercises that reduce fat stored around the middle. While abdominal exercises such as planks and sit-ups can improve core strength and build muscle in that region, they do little to reduce the fat that sits over those muscles."

Rhodri Whittaker, a sports scientist at the Absolute Body Solutions gym chain, says eating fewer calories is the best way to lose fat, for most people. Attempting to eat the same amount but burn more calories through exercise is too tough. "You need to be consuming less than you are using. It's a lot harder to train yourself into a calorie deficit — most people won't have the time available, and they won't be training as hard as they think they are. Track your calories for a week and weigh yourself. If you eat fewer calories you will lose fat." I don't focus on single meals but look across seven days. This summer has included several glorious fish and chip dinners enjoyed guilt-free. However, I ensure that most of my meals across the week are made up of fresh vegetables and lean protein.

My 30-31in waist requires that I lift weights at least three times a week, run at least twice and walk or cycle around when possible. As we age, slipping into skinny frailty can have disastrous consequences, even if our clothes hang nicely. While the Nineties may have been obsessed with weight loss, the goal now is healthy body composition: you don't necessarily want there to be less of you, but you may want to change what you're made up of.

No one really knows what our later years will bring, but what's certain is that a slim waist and a strong body will be more capable of dealing with setbacks. And you never know when tight black PVC trousers will make a comeback.

'It may sound smug but an expanding waistline in midlife is not inevitable'

Alice Hart-Davis, 63

Look, I'm sure you don't really want to hear this, but developing a bit of a tummy in midlife is not inevitable. It's common, for sure. Normal, even. But not inevitable. And, sorry, but at 63 my waist is much the

same size as it was in my twenties. Probably a bit smaller because I was a good stone heavier then, and carrying more muscle. What size was my waist? I don't know, I didn't measure it. My benchmark in the 1980s was a favourite pair of jeans and whether they fitted me. I haven't tried them on for years but I bet they'd be loose on me.

If you met me and asked me how I've managed this, what with three pregnancies and menopause along the way, my socially acceptable answer would be: "Gosh, well... luck? Genes? Fast metabolism?" It helps to deflect the animus that would come my way should I risk telling contemporaries who are struggling with their expanding tummies that I take a boring but determined this-is-not-happening approach to middle-aged spread, since that implies they could maybe do it too.

That may sound smug. I know I'm lucky that by my stage of life I'm not struggling with illness, medication, injuries or unhelpful genes. But there are basic things many of us can do to help to keep our waistlines in check.

There's also a health reason to care whether your jeans do up easily. A new German-led analysis of UK Biobank data suggests excess weight may account for more than 10 per cent of cancers, and waist measurements may show up risks that BMI measurements miss. Visceral fat around our organs is particularly bad news.

So what do I do? Three pretty straightforward things. I took menopause seriously and got medical advice to manage my hormones. I work at keeping the muscle I have and I keep an eye on what I eat. End of. Except it's not quite that simple.

First, hormones. When women notice their midriff expanding in their forties and fifties they tend to think, "I'm getting fat! I must eat less!" before they stop to consider that menopause is changing the whole equation of weight gain.

As our oestrogen levels fall we tend to store fat more centrally and viscerally, becoming an apple shape with fat-padded organs on the inside. At the same time we're slowly losing muscle mass, unless we're doing something about it, such as lifting weights. So the number on the scales may barely change even though our shape is visibly altering.

I was lucky here. In 2007, when I was 44, I didn't know the word "perimenopause". I was sent to write about a clinic where they tested my blood for everything, including hormone levels. My tests were normal, but two years later I started to feel a bit peculiar, fuzzy around the edges mentally and physically, and definitely getting thicker around my middle. I went back for another hormone test, found my levels were beginning to drop and have been on some form of HRT since, which made the long slide through menopause more of an easy glide than a rollercoaster.

Obviously HRT is not a weight-loss treatment and it's not something every woman wants, but if you're facing disruptive symptoms, all the brain fog and hot sweats, I'd consider it, or at least discuss it with your GP. Having oestrogen back in your system helps in many ways, protecting bone density, improving skin strength and balancing out the androgens (the "male" hormones) that can lead to that weight gain round the middle.

Then there's muscle maintenance, and there's no escaping the fact that it's hard graft, rather than luck, that gets results here. Anyone who reads these pages regularly may well be sick of hearing that we all need to be lifting weights, but we really do. Muscle lets us walk briskly, climb stairs, balance so that we don't fall, and sit down without going "oof" as the years roll by. It matters for metabolic health too.

Actually, I was lucky here too, to fall in with the brilliant trainer Zana Morris 15 years ago. She got me into weights and persuaded me that it was use it or lose it time as far as my ageing muscles were concerned. I'm hugely grateful for that because my muscle mass is still pretty good, though certainly not exceptional.

There's more work required, apparently. A recent full-body MRI showed plenty of degeneration in my spine. "No more than we'd expect at your age," the doctor said, "but whatever exercise you're doing, do more of it. More weights, more yoga, more jogging." Oof.

In theory I do weights and yoga, and cycle to get around town. Right now, though, I have one dodgy shoulder and two dodgy knees, so whatever I do hurts, and I'm doing more boring but vital physio exercises than impressive lifting or backbends.

Exercise isn't going to whittle your waist, but if your muscles are strong they act like a corset and help you to stand up straight and hold everything in. And since muscle burns more calories than fat, hanging onto muscle helps to preserve the amount of energy your body uses on a daily basis too.

So what about my metabolism? Does it run fast? My fitness tracker reckons I get through roughly 2,000 calories a day. I reckon years of regular exercise probably helps me to burn more than average for someone my age with a sedentary job.

Which brings us to food. Even with all the HRT and exercise, when I gain fat/weight it stacks on round my middle. This happens every winter (parties! Christmas! Panettone and stollen! Life is for living!), but I'm 5ft 9in, so I can gain a stone without anyone noticing, especially under big jumpers in January, so I've mostly stopped fretting about it. By Easter, though, I'm fed up with the extra padding and eat a bit less until it goes.

What do I eat to shift it? There's no special regimen, just plenty of protein and veg and some complex carbohydrates. The aim is not just to lose the extra fat but to hang onto muscle while doing it.

This year I outsourced the mental load of deciding what to eat to AI. "Make me a food plan," I commanded, "so I get 100g of protein and 30g fibre a day with loads of veg and pulses, plus healthy fats and some fruit. Here are the foods I like and hate. Also please include one oat flat white every day, enough milk for six mugs of tea, and two pains au raisin a week, just because. And keep it all to 1,800 calories a day." Back came a weekly menu and a shopping list. Marvellous. It's also — once you have 150g of chicken and 200g of veg on your plate at lunchtime or dinner — a huge amount of food, so I don't get hungry.

And yes, sorry, I lose weight on 1,800 calories a day. It's slow but it suits me. Rapid weight loss can take lean tissue with it, and at my age that muscle is precious. Do I follow it to the letter? Of course not. There are dinners, birthdays and work breakfasts, and, rarely, alcohol — it really doesn't agree with me these days.

None of this is magic. As I said, it's all quite boring. But I find when I do all this my waistline looks after itself.

Like Gary Lineker, I'm very happy to live on my own

By Stephen Armstrong

I have never felt like I had much in common with the multimillionaire Gary Lineker. But on the *Begin Again with Davina McCall* podcast this week he spoke to me when he explained to her that, even if he weren't single, "I'm not sure I could imagine regularly sleeping with someone again or sharing a bed."

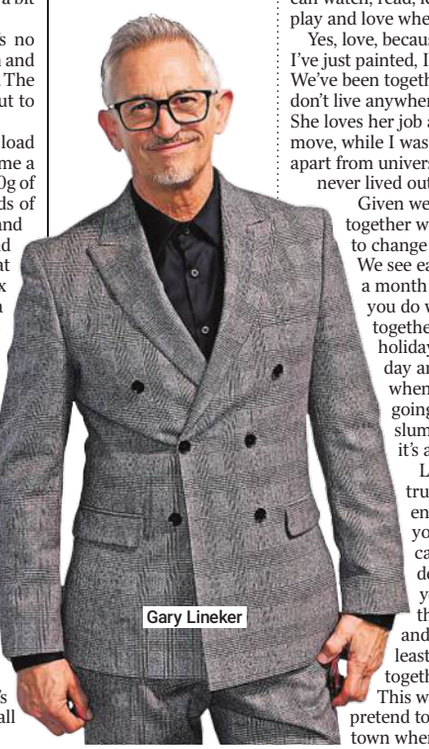
Like Lineker, I live alone, just in a significantly smaller house. And after 15 years of living like this after 15 years of marriage, I can't imagine living any other way, even though I'm no longer single. After my incredibly amicable divorce — my ex-wife lives ten minutes away and we shared looking after our now adult daughters — I tried online dating. I met some brilliant women and learnt a lot. I started out thinking I was looking for my next live-in partner, but slowly realised this is how I actually wanted to live.

Is it a Gen X thing? I'm 55 and have friends, female and male, happily living alone... or, rather, by themselves. They're not all single. Some are sharing childcare with ex-partners, some are just happier in their own territory with no need to work out any petty daily negotiations.

The bathroom is a particularly cherished sanctuary for "no-habiters", as we've been called. Some people don't want to share their fancy moisturiser or posh shower gel. But there are less glamorous reasons. As Lineker pointed out, "As you get older you tend to make a few more bathroom trips in the night."

My two Gen Z daughters are in and out of the house, but otherwise I am free to do what I want. I can work through my weird physio exercises every morning without feeling a fool. I can do a big wash, dump it at the bottom of the stairs and take it up in small portions without passive-aggressive comments. I can watch, read, leave, arrive, sleep, eat, play and love when I want.

Yes, love, because despite the picture I've just painted, I do have a girlfriend. We've been together for three years and don't live anywhere near one another. She loves her job and has no desire to move, while I was born in London and, apart from university in Cardiff, have never lived outside zone 6.



Given we're not raising children together we can't see any reason to change a set-up that works. We see each other once or twice a month and do the fun stuff you do when you're not living together. We go on great holidays, talk or text every day and support each other when things are or aren't going well. And if we do slump in front of the TV, it's an active choice.

Living apart requires trust. But who has the energy for affairs when you're sorting Mum's care provision, meeting deadlines, helping young adult kids with their own work issues and trying to keep at least vaguely fit? Living together is low-romance. This way I can at least pretend to be a stylish man about town when required.

I'm going to university at 66 — I'm thrilled

The actress Caroline Quentin, who left school at 16, tells Julia Llewellyn-Smith why she's excited for a new challenge

Caroline Quentin

Caroline Quentin is extremely excited. This week she'll be attending the University of London's freshers festival, where "I'm going to be the little white-haired old lady joining all the wrong clubs". Aged 66, Quentin, best known for her roles in *Jonathan Creek* and *Men Behaving Badly*, has enrolled on a two-year postgraduate diploma in history of art at the prestigious Courtauld Institute.

"I'm a student!" she shrieks. "It really makes me laugh but I'm bloody thrilled. I'm giddy with it. I'm terrified. My son keeps laughing at me. He says, 'Will you be in the bar at freshers week having pints?'"

Quentin left school at 16. No one in her family had been to university. "It wasn't in the ether but now I'm going to be educated," she says. "It's amazing how many people around me are Oxbridge or Russell Group-educated. I don't envy them that, it's fantastic, but now it's my turn. I've paid a lot of tax and want to reap the benefit of what everyone else is enjoying."

She was inspired watching *University Challenge* with her 23-year-old son William, who is studying for a master's in law at Durham University (her daughter Rose, 27, is an actress). "This thing about art came on. They were not getting some of the questions, I was getting quite a lot. William said, 'Mum, have you ever thought about studying history of art? You really love it and clearly know a bit?'"

On receiving her application the Courtauld asked to be put in touch with Quentin's last academic teacher. "I said, 'Only through a medium.'" She wrote a 3,500-word essay about Lucian Freud and six weeks later heard she'd been accepted. "Now the reality is dawning on me," she cries, speaking over Zoom from a friend's house in London. "I didn't even know what a semester was but now I've chosen modules. I have a reading list! Normally I only read on the beach in a swimsuit or read scripts."

Student life isn't the only change Quentin has embraced. During Covid she embarked on an unexpected new career as a gardening influencer. Her @cqgardens Instagram account has 209,000 followers and has spawned a gift shop selling everything from tea towels and aprons decorated with Quentin's drawings to hand salve created by her cosmetic scientist husband, Sam Farmer.

She has also become an author. Her first book, *Drawn to the Garden*, combining beautiful illustrations, recipes, gardening tips and memoir, came out two years ago and was a Sunday Times bestseller. "Everyone was very surprised," she says. "We thought it would be a nice little gifting book. I just think we're all desperate for outside spaces and the countryside, and it hit a nerve."

Now she's publishing *Drawn to Nature*, focusing on the wider natural world, which has given her "comfort" since her "chaotic" childhood, when her pilot father was often away and her mother, who had bipolar disorder, was often hospitalised. Her parents later divorced. She is touched by the number of Instagram followers telling her she has inspired them to write or draw.

"It's amazing what you can do in your mid-sixties," she says. "I'm suddenly doing things I've never done before, and because I don't know what I'm doing, or the pitfalls, they're going much better than I'd expect. Sometimes naivety is quite a useful thing. People who follow me are very much people like me, of an age where we're coming to a point in life where you think, 'OK, is it all downhill now?' It's the point where you have to go, 'Right, I'm going to do [something new] or lie down and pull up the tartan blanket."

It's not as if Quentin had no life before. Her distinguished CV includes being in the 1985 original cast of *Les Misérables*, stints at the Royal Shakespeare Company, not to mention extensive television work, including starring in Sky Max's recent *The Lazarus Project* and the forthcoming 5 crime drama *Last Resort*, alongside Jason Watkins and Tessa Peake-Jones. Yet I recently heard Quentin describe her glitzy showbiz career to the BBC's *Gardeners' World* as "prosaic and mundane".

"I've done it such a long time," Quentin says with a shrug. "I started work at 16 as an end-of-the-pier dancer. Everything else I fell into fortuitously. It's taken me 50 years in showbusiness to suddenly go, 'Actually I want to do something else and I want to do something for me.'

"I'm sure lots of people love it, but acting loses its lustre. Standing on set at 7am having been in make-up since 5.30am, wrapping at 8pm, going home and learning your lines for the next day. It's pretty stultifying, because it's not like you're learning anything new. It's not like reading a book where you're getting information. You're just learning parrot fashion. It's somebody else's creative work. I was feeling undernourished."

How long had she felt this way? "Probably twenty years."

It was *Men Behaving Badly* that made Quentin a household name, with its 1990s celebration of two boorish, boozing men. "I have mixed feelings about that show," Quentin says. "I'm proud of the fact I stood up for myself and the women in the show within rehearsals and when scripts came in. I said, 'I'm not here just to feed the boys funny lines. I want funny lines and I want the girls to win the argument sometimes.'

"Nonetheless, there's a lot of stuff I don't think would hold up to scrutiny now. It was of its time, the peak of lad culture, all those magazines like *Loaded*. Although, oddly, I think what's happened now is that laddishness and loathing of women has gone underground. You've suddenly got Andrew Tate and incels, which is much worse. At least then it was open and we were allowed to knock it down. It's really terrifying." You could not make a sitcom about Andrew Tate. "You absolutely could not!"

Misgivings aside, it was on the show that Quentin, whose marriage to the comedian Paul Merton had ended, met Farmer, who is 12 years her junior and was working as a runner. They settled in Devon in a house with 35 acres, where Quentin's passion for gardening was allowed full rein. Yet two years ago they downsized to a rented two-bedroom bungalow in Somerset. "We've got lots of young people so we needed to access some cash," she says. "I didn't want a mortgage any more and the garden was getting really hard to look after."

Quentin "brutally" decluttered. "I was drowning in stuff. We had a barn full of shit." Art she'd collected over 50 years and cupboards full of clothes had to go. "I'm still struggling with shoes. I have 10 or 12 pairs, and I should really have three or

Quentin with her actress daughter Rose

Caroline Quentin's perfect weekend

Lark or owl?
Lark
Big breakfast or green juice?
Green juice mostly, but sometimes bacon and eggs
Yoga or sofa?
Yoga. I do 15 minutes every morning
City or countryside?
Countryside 100 per cent
Stage fright or essay crisis?
Essay crisis
Signature dish?
I've just done a programme called *Cooking with the Stars*. Michael Caines, who has two Michelin stars, taught me to make a chicken fricassée in traditional French style, it's absolutely delicious
Screensaver on your phone?
A photograph I took of a cloudscape
Last thing you googled?
It sounds rather sanctimonious but plans by the government to tackle river pollution
Couldn't get through the weekend without...
...a good countryside walk

NEALE HAYNES/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES; S MEDDLE/ITV/SHUTTERSTOCK

four, it's utterly ridiculous." Getting rid of stuff was "so liberating. I have more headspace, parts that would have been full of 'Oh my God, I must do ironing' or 'I must get that to the laundry' are now full of Rembrandt and Hockney, things I want to think about."

Talk returns to student life. Quentin plans to stay two or three nights a week in London at a friend's house so she can attend lectures. As the main breadwinner she'll still fit in some acting. William has advised her not to neglect her social life, which is just as important as academics. "It's f***ing adorable!" She's not going to join the freshers pub crawl but excitedly asks me what kind of societies might be on offer. I suggest dancing might appeal to a former *Strictly* contestant.

"I'd love that!" she says. "I'm pretty sedentary. Can you imagine me jiving with a 22-year-old? Sam can't wait to tell people his wife's an art student because they'll think he's going out with a 25-year-old. William says, 'You're going to have a student card and an OAP bus pass. You won't have to pay full price for pints and you'll get home free on the night bus.'" She beams. "Even if I turn out to be a terrible student, the joy this has already given us is marvellous."

Drawn to Nature **by Caroline Quentin (Quarto Publishing £20). To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935. Free UK standard P&P on online orders over £25. Special discount available for Times+ members**

Set kids free! The expert who says phones aren't the issue

Dr Peter Gray tells Charlotte Lytton we should worry less about social media and more about helicopter parenting

There's no doubt that anxiety and depression among children are at record highs. There were more than one million child mental health referrals in the UK last year — nearly double the figure from 2018-19 — and last week analysis from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health found a sharp rise in children as young as six attending A&E in a mental health crisis.

What's up for debate are the causes. In his 2024 international bestseller *The Anxious Generation* the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt persuasively laid much of the blame on smartphones, sparking a global movement to ban social media for under-16s that is in action in Australia and will kick in here in the spring.

Dr Peter Gray, Haidt's fellow psychologist and once a close colleague, is deeply concerned. When, at Haidt's request, he read a prepublication draft of the book he told him he fundamentally disagreed with its premise. As acclaim from policymakers and parents grew he published a critique, calling the book a "scary story not supported by science". This, he admits, "led to some parting of the ways, I'm sorry to say".

Gray is a fan of Haidt's previous work but critical of studies he cites to show a link between screen use and anxiety, depression and, at worst, suicide. "There is really no evidence that social media use or smartphone use or any of this technology is having more harm than benefit," he says.

Gray's concern is that knee-jerk restrictions only increase the real danger to young people's mental health: a laser focus on protecting them from every risk that reduces their independence and confidence, leaving them struggling both in the real world and the online one they need to learn to navigate, as well.

"It is a testament to children's natural strength and resilience that they are not more depressed than they are," Gray writes in *Restoring Childhood: How to Set Kids Free in the Age of Anxiety*. This new book, which makes a case for giving kids more freedom online as well as offline, is positioned as a counterpoint to Haidt's.

It's a controversial view since nine in ten parents in the UK support a social media ban for under-16s, but the 82-year-old father and grandfather is just as frank when we speak, reeling off the ways in which he believes overprotective, achievement-focused modern parenting styles have destroyed children's freedom to play, explore and solve their own problems without adult supervision.

GETTY IMAGES

Gray doesn't blame helicopter parents alone. As he points out, giving children the freedoms he enjoyed in the Fifties — playing alone with his friends in the park, walking to the shop to get his grandmother's cigarettes from the age of four — would see them reported to social services today.

As a research professor of psychology and neuroscience at Boston College, Massachusetts, Gray has spent his career studying the role of play in human evolution and development. His book *Free to Learn* set out his theory that encouraging independent, unsupervised play is the surest route to raising capable, happy children. It was published in 2013, before the real rise in social media use and anxiety rates in young people, but correlation is not causation, Gray points out. He believes a bigger piece of the puzzle lies in schools.

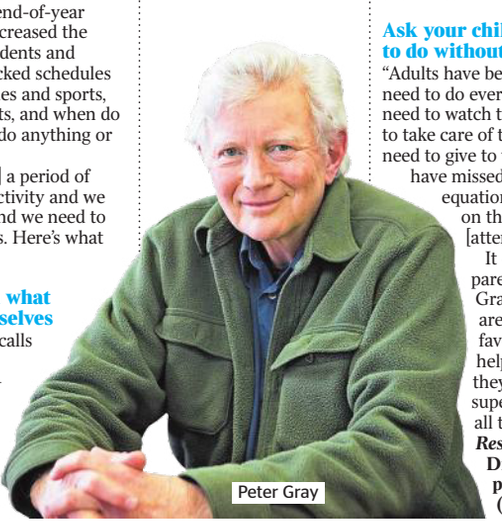
When teenagers are asked about the source of their mental suffering, he notes, most say it is school pressure. On both sides of the Atlantic he cites a move towards "more required courses, fewer optional courses, much greater use of government-prescribed end-of-year testing [which] greatly increased the stress experienced by students and teachers". Add tightly packed schedules of extracurricular activities and sports, again supervised by adults, and when do children get a chance to do anything or go anywhere alone?

"Childhood [should be] a period of increased independent activity and we have destroyed that — and we need to bring it back," Gray urges. Here's what he suggests.

> "There is no evidence that smartphone use is having more harm than benefit

Don't do for children what they can do for themselves

Gray advocates what he calls "trustful, autonomy-supporting parenting" — in other words, encouraging children's innate drive to explore on their own, and learn from their mistakes and failures.



Peter Gray

And it's never too early to begin. Take toddlers, most of whom want to "help" around the house. Cultures that accept that children learn by chipping in with tasks such as washing up or sweeping the floor find that "by the time they're four or five years old the help is real help. So we need to let kids do, even if they're not doing it well, what it is that they want to do, because that's how they learn, and that's how they grow."

Let kids travel alone from an early age

"Independent mobility is a great confidence builder," Gray says, pointing out that decades ago, walking to school solo at the age of five was considered normal. Even if today's parents balk at this, "they might think about what they could grant and at what age. At what age could the child walk a bike to school, or go to a local park or a friend's house, or run more errands for the parent?"

Remember, mental health issues are a bigger risk than stranger danger

The opposite of trustful parenting is "fear-based parenting — where the parent worries that everything that you might do is dangerous, and therefore you either can't do it, or I have to go with you while you're doing it", Gray says. "There's a bigger danger here of your child not developing the confidence and self-reliance needed to become an effective adult. The rate of death by suicide among teenagers is way higher than the rate of death by being [abducted] by a stranger and murdered. So we need to start rethinking."

Respect your child's privacy

Just as it would have once been considered unethical to read your child's diary, Gray considers tracking them on Find My Friends "immoral. It's a sign of distrust, [and] it's way too much infringement on any sense of privacy that the child might have."

In decades where free play was the norm "kids got used to being away from parents, parents got used to their kids being away from them" — crucial for giving them a sense of agency over their lives.

Ask your child what they want to do without you

"Adults have been led to believe that we need to do everything for our kids. We need to watch them all the time, we need to take care of them all the time, we need to give to them all the time." Yet we have missed a crucial part of this equation: "Nobody wants to be on the receiving end of all that [attention] all the time."

It can be hard for anxious parents to relinquish control, Gray says. Those who can are "doing their child a favour. They are really helping them to grow when they are not hovering and supervising and correcting all the time."

Restoring Childhood **by Dr Peter Gray is published on Thursday (Little, Brown £25)**

How to reset your cortisol, by the stress expert with five children

It's known as the stress hormone, but cortisol is actually vital for boosting energy levels, says Dr Erin Kinney. Here's how to optimise it

Dr Erin Kinney, below, and with her family, above

We tend to think of cortisol as the stress hormone and worry that our levels are unhealthily raised by the unrelenting pace of modern life. But is our framing of this essential hormone all wrong? That's the view of Dr Erin Kinney, a US-trained physician turned naturopathic doctor known as the Stress Reset Expert to the thousands who have sought help at her clinic. She argues that instead of worrying about having too much cortisol, we should be making sure our reserves of this vital energy hormone don't run too low.

"Yes, when cortisol gets too high, it can cause a problem," Kinney says. "But it is the hormone your body uses to generate energy, handle stress, heal and perform at its best." Cortisol regulates our circadian rhythm, acts as a natural anti-inflammatory, supports brain function and helps manage blood sugar. When it becomes depleted, Kinney says, issues such as exhaustion, insomnia, migraines, bloating, mood swings, weight gain, loss of libido and joint pain can arise.

Kinney, 42, runs a busy stress clinic near Washington DC, where she specialises in chronic health conditions related to hormonal and nervous system imbalances. She has now written a book, *The Cortisol Cure: The Secret to Resetting Your Stress Response, Boosting Energy and Feeling Better Than Ever*, in which she argues that it would be more helpful for us to think of cortisol as an energy hormone, not a stress hormone, and to pay attention to how a cortisol deficit can occur. She likes to use the analogy of a bank account. "When you're stressed you are in a spend state, you're spending money — or cortisol — from that account," she says. "And then when you're resting, sleeping, doing anything that engages the parasympathetic nervous system, you're earning it back."

The problem, she says, is that a majority of us don't actively rest. We regard "down time" as a waste of time. "Rest doesn't take away from your recovery, it fuels it," Kinney says. When we factor peaceful pauses into our day — from sitting in the sun for ten minutes without our phone to doing a crossword — we are building our cortisol reserves. Yet most of us rarely allow ourselves the time to do this.

Kinney is talking from personal experience. In 2019 her marriage ended. "I was in pure survival mode that year," she says. "My ex-husband and I shared a business. We had two daughters. Every part of my life crashed." She lived on adrenaline and caffeine, worked nonstop, ate mainly toast and barely slept.

In 2021 she suffered burnout. "I got really, really depressed," she says. "Outwardly I had this career that I loved, beautiful daughters, but I did not feel good at all. I'd wake up and think, 'I cannot wait to go to bed.' I was so tired." Blood tests confirmed her cortisol was low. "Symptom-wise, it's hard to tell if it's simply low cortisol or a myriad of other things. In my case, I did run lab tests."

What happens physiologically if we're low on cortisol? "If you have to get up and face work, the first thing the body will say is, 'Ooh, I don't have enough cortisol but we still have to go into get-it-done mode' — it will increase the production of adrenaline," she says. "Adrenaline without cortisol will give you that 'tired but wired' feeling. You're functioning but it doesn't feel good. Your heart might be racing. Your brain might be foggy. You've got energy but you're not fully 'on'."

If this continues for long enough, sex hormones are depleted too. This is because oestrogen, progesterone, testosterone and cortisol are all similar steroidal hormones, Kinney says, and eventually your body gets desperate enough to raid the sex hormone "savings account" to make more cortisol. In your twenties and thirties, when sex hormones like oestrogen are in good supply, you can spare it. But not when you're in your forties and the sex hormone account is low on funds. "Then," Kinney says, "stress hits so much harder."

She points out that midlifers are especially prone to draining their cortisol reserves. "You're raising children, taking care of ageing parents, you're at the height of your career," she says. "There's a lot of 'spend' happening."

The irony that Kinney is a stress doctor who specialises in helping patients recover from burnout didn't escape her when she suffered from it herself. "I was really embarrassed," she says. "But it shows that none of us are immune to this."

It took Kinney six months to slowly crawl out of what she calls her "deep cortisol-debt hole". She went to therapy and began working with a life coach. She hired more people and started taking more breaks. In 2023 she reconnected with a widowed friend, Jason (their children had attended the same school). The following year they got engaged. They are now married. "I have three stepchildren. It's been beautiful."

Her career remains full-on, and with children aged 14, 13, 12, 10 and 9, she is busier than ever. But she approaches everyday pressures differently now, she says. Balancing our system doesn't mean ridding our lives of stress. "That's not possible. My two biggest stressors are my five children and my work, both of which I love. I'm not going to get rid of them, I just have to make sure I have enough cortisol in my 'account' to spend appropriately."

In her book she explains how even in the most frazzling circumstances, we can improve our health by actively training ourselves to relax. "When you're busy all the time, it's like working out your 'stress' muscle and so that muscle gets stronger. And if you don't do a jigsaw puzzle or any of these relaxing activities, the 'relax' muscle will get weaker. Then when you try to access it, the stress muscle's going to fire. You have to start training that 'relax' muscle as well."

Anna Maxted

Dr Kinney's cortisol-balancing tips

Start with one or two short, calming daily habits

In a world that rewards busyness and constant productivity, taking a moment to pause can feel uncomfortable. Start with just one or two practices. See how they feel. Some you may end up practising every single day. Others might be your go-to when you're on edge or overwhelmed. See what resonates. With time and consistency, you will not only build your stores of cortisol but strengthen your "rest" muscle.

In the morning, sit outside for ten minutes without your phone

This may sound simple but it isn't easy at first. I didn't realise how often I reached

MEREDITH MINOR PHOTOGRAPHY

for my phone until I intentionally started leaving it inside while I stepped out into the sun. I try to do this in the morning or after a meal, just ten minutes of light and stillness. No notifications, no input, just space. It's become one of the smallest but most restorative things I do.

Say no to at least one thing each week

I used to say yes just because the time was technically there. But "technically" usually meant rushing, skipping meals or being drained. Now, if I look at my calendar and see a two-hour window where something could fit, I pause. If it's going to cost me my calm, it's not worth it. Just because you can squeeze it in doesn't mean you should.

Go for a slow walk without multitasking or listening to a podcast

No podcast, no music, no catching up on phone calls, just walking. Even five minutes helps. The goal isn't to get in steps or be productive, it's to let your mind and body move without input. If you can leave your phone at home, even better. The real shift comes from walking without needing to learn, solve or scroll.

Make a designated time in your calendar called 'rest'

I used to treat rest as something I'd get to if everything else was done but now I block out time in my calendar that says "rest", just as I would for a meeting or an appointment. No emails. No laundry. No errands, just space to do nothing at all. Start small — say, a few minutes — and try to build up to protecting a few hours each week. It's not lazy or indulgent, it's how you stay well.

Do a jigsaw puzzle for a mindful break

When my mind feels buzzy or scattered, I turn to a puzzle. There's something about the physical act of putting pieces together that helps settle my thoughts. It's just focused enough to pull me out of mental loops but not so demanding that it adds more pressure.

Build an evening wind-down into your routine

My ideal wind-down includes a mug of tea, a novel and putting my phone away about an hour before bedtime. It helps me shift gears and tells my body the day is done. Evening routines don't have to be elaborate. Yours might be ten minutes of putting your legs up the wall, listening to a meditation while brushing your teeth, or simply dimming the lights and slowing down. The ritual itself is the message — it's OK to rest.

Read fiction for 15 minutes — in the afternoon if you can

When my brain feels fried, I pick up a novel and read for 10 to 15 minutes. This tiny escape is surprisingly effective. (Research from the University of Sussex shows that just six minutes of reading can reduce stress by lowering heart rate and easing tension.)

Practise 'gratitude' in small, honest doses

Gratitude — intentionally recognising the positive things in your life — is one of the most well-studied tools for nervous system regulation. It can shift your focus, reduce stress and help your brain produce the feelgood hormones dopamine and serotonin. It's quick, simple and easy to return to.

Why you should stimulate the vagus nerve

The vagus nerve is one of the main communication lines between your brain and body. It helps to activate your parasympathetic nervous system, the rest-and-digest mode that calms stress. You can gently stimulate it through simple practices such as humming, singing, chanting or even gargling. I like to hum quietly in the car or sing along to one song in the morning. It helps strengthen your body's natural relaxation response over time.

Put your feet up for ten minutes in the afternoon

This one is a nod to my grandmother Betty, who also raised five children and swore this habit kept her sane. Lie down for 10 to 20 minutes with your feet up. This isn't a nap. It's a pause to lie down, lift your feet, close your eyes and let the world be quiet for a few minutes.

Do this when you are washing your hands

I started doing this as a micro-break in between patients and it's a perfect little reset. I let the water run warm, notice the feel of the soap, take one deep breath. It takes only 20 to 30 seconds but it allows me to slow down even for a moment and re-emerge calmer.

Lower the stimulation load where you can

In a world that's constantly buzzing with noise, your nervous system rarely gets a break. You don't need to eliminate stimulation entirely, just create small windows of quiet. Drink your coffee without a screen. Take a five-minute walk. These short pauses help your brain reset and create space for calm.

Reduce your multitasking by designating 'blocks' of time

Multitasking drains your focus and your nervous system. Instead, designate blocks of time, giving your brain one thing to focus on at a time. Set aside small chunks of time for focused work, rest or even chores — whatever matters most. Even 20 minutes of protected, single-focus time can help your body shift out of the constant "go" mode.

Practise meditation in a way that works for you

Meditation is one of the most powerful tools for calming the nervous system and helping your body shift out of fight-or-flight mode. But it doesn't have to look like total silence or an empty mind. In fact, the goal isn't to stop thinking, it's to gently focus your brain on one thing. That could be your breath, a mantra, a visualisation or even a peaceful daydream. Like any of these practices, it gets easier the more you do it.

Do this breathing when you feel overwhelmed

Inhale for four counts, hold for four, exhale for four, hold for four. You can use this anywhere: after a tense conversation, sitting on a train between meetings or when you simply feel overwhelmed. It's one of my quickest resets. I usually do three to five rounds a few times a day. No one even knows you're doing it.

***The Cortisol Cure* by Erin Kinney (Little, Brown £16.99), to be published on September 22**

Flashing lights and techno: why rave yoga is good for my brain

By Anna Murphy

> "There is the idea of quiet, of sombreness around yoga. This is about joy

Am I in a yoga class or a club? If it weren't for the fact that it's 6.45pm on a Friday, not 11.45pm, I wouldn't be sure. The Rogue Room is a newish yoga studio in Shoreditch, east London (therogueroom.com). It comes not just with mats but with flashing lights and the kind of techno-inflected music that is normally the soundtrack to hedonism rather than the yoga tenet of *ahimsa* (that's non-violence to you or me).

It's a new experience for me, a yogi of two decades, to be balancing on one leg at the same time as having my proprioception challenged by the so-called intelligent lighting I am used to enjoying on a dancefloor.

I quickly learn that intelligent lighting has the capacity to make one feel the very opposite. But it's an enjoyable test for the ego, wobbling around in a way one doesn't usually. With your vision altered, your brain — and body — has to rethink how it does some things, especially those that involve balance.

Rosie Hall, the founder, is "more of a clubber than a yogi, but both activities are related, a version of the same thing", she tells me. "I like to feel the music, to be moving in a room with strangers."

Two of the capital's best teachers — Imi Wiseman and Alan Ellman, who together have developed a high-octane yoga practice they call RocketBeats — are, along with Hall, a mainstay of the schedule. "There is the idea of sombreness, of quiet, around yoga," Wiseman says. "What Rosie has done is create an environment that is more about joy and community." Which is not to say that the RocketBeats duo don't take what they do seriously, as anyone who has survived one of their challenging but fun classes will know.

There's a side to what Hall is offering that's even more serious, because she has signed up two science consultants. The first is Professor Russell Foster, head of the sleep and circadian neuroscience institute at the University of Oxford. Foster is interested in how different kinds of light can tune us in better to our circadian rhythms.

With his help Hall has developed a lighting programme that is more blue-focused during morning practices, the better to wake us up — "the alerting effect", as Foster puts it — and more red-centred in the evening, to do the opposite — "the calming effect".

Dr Julia Basso, who describes herself, brilliantly, as "a contemporary dancer and neuroscientist", runs the Embodied Brain Lab at Virginia Tech in the US. At the Rogue Room "we found these distinct networks were activated by different classes", Basso says. "During the more upbeat classes there were more executive function networks, while during yin sessions there was more internal focus. The spaces with different kinds of movement, light and music really enact brain plasticity."

Basso is looking forward to returning to carry out more research. And I am looking forward to returning for more of what I am christening yoga-clubbing. You heard it here first.

Anna Murphy

Virgin Atlantic Holidays have got
your South African retreat ready.
The relaxing flights.
The exclusive stay.
But that's just for starters.
We've found the mountain trail to
the most epic view. Packed a picnic
with a bottle of our favourite vintage.
Saved you a shady spot among the vines.
And left room for penguins, coastlines
and one more glass before dinner.
The only thing you need
to ask yourself is...
IF NOT NOW,
WHEN?
SKYTEAM
ALLIANCE MEMBER
virgin atlantic
holidays

Have you got end-of-summer sadness? The psychologist's tips

Struggling with the September blues? Julia Samuel on how to navigate the late-season slump

GETTY IMAGES; JOONEY WOODWARD FOR THE TIMES

I was surprised by the low hum of dread I felt at the end of this summer. A kind of melancholy. Often I have quite a perky back-to-school feeling: a new notebook, the relief to wear shoes. Yet as the days have passed, I've seen the light change, work has gathered pace and I'm not ready. I don't want the holidays to end.

I love summer. Mine was busy and full of people I love. Yet I feel I need a holiday after my holiday: a few days of silence and quiet, with nothing expected of me. Instead my diary has filled up. I like the structure that work gives me but I start September tired and it has asked me to accelerate. I want a break. I suspect lots of us do.

Maybe it is because this year it has been particularly beautiful, which makes the ending harder. When something has given us pleasure we want to hold on to it. Sadness often follows love and enjoyment because we recognise that something we valued has ended. We do not need to treat that feeling as a problem. It tells us something was important.

Maybe when I say I want a break, I actually want time to pause. That, I think, sits underneath some of my melancholy. Transitions make time visible. They show us that something has ended and ask us to move towards what comes next. The end of the year has come into view and, if I'm truthful, the reality of another one passing feels a tad too real.

Perhaps that is why this particular transition carries so much emotional freight. The long holidays connect us to our childhood. For many of us those six weeks represented freedom. The glee as the school gates closed and time opened up ahead. We played. We stayed outside. We went to bed later. For some of us, even if our childhood holidays were far from idyllic, memory can apply a rose-tinted lens, and summer still carries a promise: freedom, pleasure and escape.

As adults we carry some of that expectation with us. The warmer months can make life feel more expansive: more light, open windows, longer evenings and less routine. Then the world contracts again. The alarm clock returns, along with the constant pings to get stuff done. Days shorten. We have to put more clothes on, which I always regard as a personal loss.

At the start of January, 12 months of possibility lie ahead. By now those possibilities have narrowed. Transitions make us notice not only what has ended but what has not happened. Perhaps the relationship we wanted has not materialised. We have not found the job. The project remains unfinished. A family difficulty has not been resolved. We can see the end of the year ahead and recognise that some of what we hoped for may not happen.

That can bring sadness, and anxiety. For some, the return to work feels like a mountain to climb. During August you may have had some space above your head. Your inbox slowed down. Deadlines receded. Then everybody comes back and the machine starts again. You see the next few months at once: meetings, targets, school commitments, dark mornings and Christmas peering round the corner.

If you are looking for work, this point in the year can feel even harder. During August you could reasonably tell yourself that everyone was away. Now they are back. Other people appear to have somewhere to return to, which can intensify the painful sense that you have fallen behind.

Anxiety has an irritating habit of showing us the whole mountain at once. We mentally run through the next four months rather than deal with what today requires. No wonder we feel exhausted before we start.

What we feel at a transition depends on what we leave and what we return to. I know plenty of people who feel enormous relief when ordinary life resumes. They are delighted that their children are back at school. They want the safety of routine, purpose and a reason to leave the house. Enough family, more colleagues and friends. For others the holidays are stressful: too much time together, childcare, expense, loneliness or the pressure to have a wonderful time. The return of ordinary life can feel reassuring.

We need freedom and structure. We can long to escape , then crave its containment, only to resent it when it returns. Structure can make us feel safe, but it restricts us. Freedom feels wonderful, but too much can leave us without an anchor. Our response depends on what we have to let go of and what waits for us next.

A holiday may introduce us to a different version of ourselves: more playful, spontaneous, sociable, adventurous. Then we come home and meet our familiar self again. Perhaps we feel a small loss there too. That contrast can tell us something useful about what the freer version of ourselves needs from ordinary life.

This time of year also marks significant transitions within families. A child starts school, another moves to secondary school, a young adult leaves for university. We spend years helping our children become independent, then their independence requires them to need us less. A parent can feel proud and bereft. A young adult can feel thrilled and terrified.

That is the paradox of a successful transition: something can be exactly what we hoped for and still involve loss. Our external world can change in a day; our internal world often needs much longer to catch up. Perhaps this is why transitions have such emotional power: they make time impossible to ignore. Children grow up. Holidays end. Years do too. Each phase requires us to leave something behind, even when we welcome what comes next.

Of course, there is a distinction between ordinary seasonal melancholy and seasonal affective disorder, a recognised form of depression associated with seasonal change. If your low mood persists or significantly affects your capacity to function, seek professional help. Otherwise it is worth working out what those weeks of summer gave you and how to take some of it with you into the next season. These tips may help.

Listen to what your feelings are really telling you

Do you need rest? Did you feel closer to people on holiday? Has work become too demanding? Did you relax more or spend more time outside? Feelings are information that give you clues about what might need to change.

What holiday habits can you keep?

Similarly, what did the holidays give you that you don't want to lose? Perhaps it was friendship, nature, spontaneity, pleasure or simply more space to breathe. How can you keep hold of this in daily life?

Don't look too far ahead

Deal with today rather than the whole season ahead. Send one email. Complete one application. Make one decision. A manageable next step restores agency and clarity to deal with whatever comes next.

Try something new, but start small

Novelty activates the brain's dopamine system, which plays a vital role in reward and motivation. A change of season offers a natural point to explore a new interest — pottery, a choir, an exercise class; anything you have wanted to try. Start small enough that you will actually do it.

Create little rituals of pleasure

Give yourself something to anticipate: a Friday evening cocktail, a particular song to mark the end of the working day or a dinner with friends. Small rituals help us to cross a transition and give the darker months pleasures of their own.

Make some room for optimism

Some of the year you imagined in January may not have happened. Allow yourself to feel the disappointment, then ask what you can still influence. Hope allows us to believe our actions can affect what happens next.

You don't need to fill your diary with plans

Resist the urge to fill every gap in your diary simply because everyone is back at work. The holidays may have reminded you that you function better with some freedom as well as structure.

Julia Samuel

I swapped the empty nest for a remote farm

When her children left home, the author Fiona Ross, 53, ditched urban life to follow a rural dream

In the total darkness our cattle's lowing reverberates from hillside to shore. It's a sound like no other, as strange to me as the black Hebridean nights that blanket my new home. But this predawn chorus is now my norm, a fact that fills me with euphoric calm.

Not long ago I was being woken by the nightly clatter of binmen in inner-city Glasgow, where I lived cheek by jowl with my husband, Neil, our three teens and two Great Danes. How did I get here, listening to this song of Highland cows flirting with their male suitors or calling their calves?

The cacophony of city living didn't bother us when the noises from our family easily equalled the traffic but, almost imperceptibly, a deafening quietness sneaked up on our home. Two of our children had flown that city nest and the third was making fledgling attempts to follow.

They were doing exactly what we'd wished for them, leaving home to pursue exciting jobs and further study. I was delighted. I was bereft. Twenty-odd years had rushed by, we had barely come up for air, now what was on the horizon for us?

Just as nature abhors a vacuum, parents often look for substitutes to fill the suddenly child-free void, but we were 47 and 52, and puppies, camper vans and cruises weren't going to do the trick.

To the bafflement of friends and family we decided we had no intention of sliding gracefully through middle age and beyond; we were going to grab that bull by the proverbials. While everyone else was envisioning mortgage-free, leisure-filled futures we risked the kids' inheritance and invested in a bunch of huge, hairy cows and sufficient land to accommodate them instead.

I've worked almost all my days as a jobbing journalist, and since the day Neil left agricultural college he has worked as an agronomist, helping farmers improve crop production. His expertise is arable but his aspirations are pastoral. His great-grandfather bred a successful commercial Highland cattle fold and for almost all his life he has dreamt of emulating him. Now was the time.

In the autumn of 2019 we packed up our flat and followed the setting sun. Glasgow is, of course, already in the west, but owing to the jaggedness of Scotland's coastline and the wealth of islands floating off that shore, you can venture a lot further still.

My parents had always taken my brother and me west for camping trips throughout our childhood and the memory of these holidays is so strong and so fond that the smell of salty machair, chips and CalMac ferry engine oil can reduce me to tears.

Four decades later that same draw swept us all the way to a glorious ten-acre coastal croft on the Keills peninsula at the edge of mainland Argyll, overlooking the Sound of Jura. It was to this extraordinary spot that we brought our first baby Highlanders: three fluffy youngsters who came from a prestigious fold nearby and kick-started our ancestral adventure.

Our children — Eilidh, Lyle and Iona, then 21, 20 and 16 — were probably the only ones to be entirely unfazed by their parents' dream. We've brought them up to feel anchored by our relationships with each other rather than by bricks and mortar but none of us knew exactly to what extent we would be embedded in this together.

By March 2020 we were living there as a family of nine (including the cows). The global pandemic had chased the children from university halls and work placements to land safely with us in Argyll. Our beloved dogs couldn't outlive their breed's reputation for short lifespans but we had a wonderful new, but old, addition — my dad.

We were delighted when he came to live with us when we first made the move west (my mum had died two decades previously), but two years later his decline into dementia was cruel and fast. As Dad's confusion and distress became heartbreakingly severe, he found a precious source of solace and calm in the most surprising company. He and our daft, mischievous Highland calves became the firmest of friends. He would stand for hours leaning on their gate chatting to them in a way that he was no longer able to manage with anyone else.

Despite these brief episodes of respite, his illness worsened. Dad's death in 2023 was unspeakably painful for the family and the bereavement shook us all back to that existential place, reminding us that now really is all we have.

As adorable as our three heifers were, they had taken us barely a fraction of the way to realising the dream of creating our own commercial fold. We needed a lot more heifers, at least a couple of boyfriends for them — and a hell of a lot more land.

HANNAH MORRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Top: Fiona Ross and, above, far right, with Lyle, Neil, Iona and Eilidh

So two years ago we decided we had to go big and we had to go even further west — sailing to our new, wet, wild and, thankfully, affordable croft on the Isle of Mull. We don't need the Beaufort scale to measure the wind that batters us here, we really can feel it in our bones, but at last we have settled — me, Neil and 48 magnificent native cows — in this most astonishing place.

Our cosy cabin is the perfect nest for parents whose brood has flown. There is something about the company of animals that grounds you, ties you to a place, gives deep meaning to everyday tasks. The daily grind of feeding and caring for them is interspersed with the mind-blowing privilege of helping them bring new life to this land we have adopted. Each new arrival cements our sense of purpose in this place. I have been on more PTA committees than I care to remember but never have I seen a slicker childcare rota in action than the babysitting regime practised every day by our cows.

We're not playing at this farming malarkey; it needs to see us into our old age, but no one has ever made a quick buck from Highlanders, so for cash flow we added 200 sheep. Lambs born in spring can be sold in autumn for fattening on the mainland. Although I aspire solely to be a cowgirl, I spend a disproportionate amount of time standing in torrential rain begging our moronic sheep to just go through a bloody gate.

Running a successful livestock farm takes hard graft — blood, sweat and tears — but we're loving it. With no city lights or urban routines it's the cycle of the seasons that dictates our work diary.

Days start at dawn and there are few jobs that can be done safely in the dark. So when the sun sets and that deep Hebridean blackness envelops us, we can rest easy like our cows out there on the dark hillside. We are home.

***Wild Knowing: Raising Highland Cows and Finding Home in the Hebrides* by Fiona Ross is published on Thursday (Bonnier £16.99)**

Just married, and my libido is gone

Dr Suzi Godson
Sex counsel

Q My husband and I got married several months ago, and to my surprise, my libido seems to have fallen off a cliff. We are a very happy couple and I never had any doubts about committing to him, but something about the permanence of this step seems to have taken away the spark for me. Is this a terrible sign, or just an adjustment?

A Marriage is a huge life transition, so I suspect you are going through a period of adjustment. You don't say much about your wedding, which is odd since it was relatively recent, but getting married can be a staggeringly stressful experience. You decide to get married because your relationship feels so important to both of you, but all too often the wedding becomes more important than the relationship. No matter how laid-back you are it is impossible not to get sucked in.

Perhaps we pour so much of ourselves into creating the perfect wedding because we have lost sight of how marriage changes the relationship. Historically marriage was supposed to determine the beginning of the sexual relationship, so it represented a big shift. Today more than nine in ten couples live together before marriage, so after the wedding you have a ring on your finger and some nice photos but you are still the same people living in the same place and doing the same things every day.

When you spend a long time planning your big day, actually being married can be surprisingly anticlimactic. In fact, post-wedding depression affects about 12 per cent of newlyweds, according to 2018 research at the University of Kentucky. It is highly unlikely that the permanence of your situation has dulled your sexual spark, but you may need to change how you think about sexual desire.

Essentially, there are two types of sexual desire. Spontaneous desire is a motivational force. It is driven by the anticipation of pleasure and requires nothing more than two people with the hots for each other being proximate. Spontaneous desire propels people towards commitment, whereas responsive desire is an openness to the idea of pleasure. It is what happens when two people who trust each other lie naked next to one another, skin against skin, and when sensations start to flutter they tune in rather than turn away.

Great sex is not about desire or sparks or spontaneity. It's about pleasure. It is about having the sex you enjoy having. It can be passionate, but it can be emotional or fierce, or playful or languid. When you are in it for the long haul great sex is about figuring out what conditions make sex most pleasurable for you both.

> "Great sex is about figuring out what conditions make sex most pleasurable for you both

This knowledge doesn't transfer telepathically. You have to talk about it. It is amazing how many couples don't, but talking about sex and pleasure is hugely important. It builds the erotic connection between you and ensures you are clear about each other's needs. It gives you the tools to address any issues that might arise in the future.

You may be newly wed, but I doubt you are oblivious to the fact that marriage is a coin toss. Roughly one in two marriages end in divorce. Learning to focus on pleasure rather than desire and to communicate rather than ruminate will improve those odds considerably.

Send your questions to weekendsex@thetimes.com

Men's health

Train with Harry Jameson

My midlife energy-boosting routine

Join our trainer in a workout video

thetimes.com/mensfitness

Win tickets to Affordable Art Fair Battersea

One Times+ member can win two all-access passes to Affordable Art Fair Battersea, running from October 14 to 18, plus an overnight stay for two at Pestana Chelsea Bridge with breakfast. **Visit thetimes.com/timesplus**

TIMES+ | Affordable Art Fair

T&Cs apply.

Big night in? Try these easy meals from the king of comfort food

The chef Thom Bateman went viral for his elevated versions of classic recipes. Hannah Evans meets him

Thom Bateman is working the pans in the kitchen where his career began 23 years ago. He was 17 when he first set foot in the restaurant, 18 when he was promoted to head chef. It was a Latin American place in those days. Now it is his name above the door of the Flintlock in Cheddleton, Staffordshire.

Bateman is a self-taught, self-made chef — or "homemade", as he prefers to say. Like most people born into a food-loving family, he grew up watching his mum cook with just as much attention as he later gave to recipes from his favourite chefs, Gary Rhodes and Anthony Bourdain. So when his brother gave him a job as front of house in the restaurant he ran in town, it wasn't long before he found his way into the kitchen.

Yet after five years Bateman quit and his career took an unexpected detour. "I started working in sales for an agricultural equipment company," he says. "It's a really tough gig being a chef. I was young and I was struggling with my mental health. This new job was hard work and it was incredible to have a new focus." But his love of cooking did not fade. "I'd tell anyone who listened that I was a chef at heart," he says with a laugh.

He started his Instagram account in 2018, sharing pictures of dishes he had cooked and restaurants he had tried. "It was my creative outlet," he says. In 2020 he got a phone call from the owners of the building that housed the restaurant he used to work in. His brother was moving on and they wanted to know if he'd take on the place. "It was a real full-circle moment," he says. "I had no experience of owning a restaurant but it felt like such a dream. So I said yes."

The Flintlock is now Michelin approved and has been awarded three AA rosettes. Bateman has more than 1.3 million Instagram followers and has appeared on *Great British Menu* twice.

His debut book, *Home Made*, is a collection of the dishes that have become Bateman signatures — simple classics elevated, such as pan-fried flaky cod with an incredible smoked butter sauce, and peri-peri chicken with an unbelievably good chicken fat mayo. There's baked eggs shakshuka with wild boar, and an Alpine-inspired version of bangers and mash with venison sausages and polenta instead of potatoes.

"I love showing you how to get the most out of an ingredient and how that can then transform a dish," he says. If you ask me, this is the kind of highbrow comfort food we should all be making.

> "I love showing how to get the most out of an ingredient and how it can then transform a dish

Thom Bateman

Crispy chicken with peanut and chilli slaw

There's something so insanely satisfying about well-made panko-crusted chicken that I'm hooked, especially when coupled with a slaw full of crunch and zing. This dish comes together quickly and becomes more than the sum of its parts.

Serves 2

Ingredients

- 2 chicken breasts
- 80g plain flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 1 tbsp garam masala
- 2 eggs
- 80g panko breadcrumbs
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- Lime wedges, to serve

For the dressing

- 1 garlic clove
- 4 tbsp Kewpie mayo
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 tbsp rice wine vinegar
- 1 tsp soft dark brown sugar
- 1 tbsp minced ginger
- A squeeze of lime juice

For the slaw

- ½ white cabbage
- 2 shallots
- 1 large carrot
- 4 spring onions
- 1 red chilli
- A handful of coriander leaves
- A handful of mint leaves
- A handful of beansprouts
- A handful of toasted peanuts
- 1 tsp sesame seeds

Method

1 First, make the dressing. Grate or crush the garlic and combine it with all the remaining ingredients in a large bowl.

2 Shred the cabbage, shallots, carrot, spring onions and chilli and add to the dressing. Finely chop the coriander and mint, setting aside a few leaves to serve, and add them to the slaw along with the beansprouts, peanuts and sesame seeds. Toss with the dressing and set aside.

3 Butterfly the chicken breasts, place between 2 sheets of clingfilm or baking parchment and flatten them with a rolling pin to a thickness of about 1cm.

4 Put the flour in a shallow bowl and season with the salt, pepper, turmeric, chilli and garam masala. Beat the eggs in another bowl, and put the breadcrumbs in a third bowl. Dust each breast with the spiced flour, then dip into beaten egg to coat, then finally into the breadcrumbs, so the breasts are fully coated.

5 Heat a 2cm depth of vegetable oil in a high-sided frying pan over a medium heat until it reaches 160C. Fry each breast for about 3 min on each side until cooked through and golden brown (or, dare I say, cook them in an air fryer if that's your thing), then transfer to a wire rack to drain, and season.

6 Serve with sea salt, plenty of slaw and some more fresh herbs and lime.

Cod with smoked butter and pickled cucumber

Pan-fried cod with smoked butter and pickled cucumber

This dish is all about the sauce and it is very, very tasty! The combination of soft flaky cod and a punchy smoked butter sauce, along with the cucumber, is properly elegant.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 x 180g cod loin pieces
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 nori sheet, blended to a powder
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 20g salted butter
- Dill fronds, to garnish

For the smoked butter sauce

- 4 shallots
- 2 celery sticks
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 fennel bulb
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 8 pink peppercorns
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 dill stalks
- 6 parsley stalks
- A pinch of salt
- 300ml rosé wine
- 500ml good-quality fish stock
- 200ml double cream
- 150g salted butter
- 50g cold smoked butter
- A squeeze of lemon juice

For the pickled cucumber

- 100ml water
- 50ml white wine vinegar
- 50g caster sugar
- 1 cucumber

Method

1 Season the cod lightly with the salt and nori powder, then leave to sit for 30 min to firm up the flesh of the fish.

2 Now make the sauce. Thinly slice the shallots, celery, garlic and fennel. Heat the vegetable oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat, add the shallots, celery, garlic, fennel, pink peppercorns, bay leaves, dill stalks and parsley stalks with a pinch of salt and cook for 2 min until the vegetables have softened but not browned. Add the wine and simmer for 25 min until reduced by three quarters, then

HAARALA HAMILTON

Crispy chicken with peanut and chilli slaw

Leek gratin

add the fish stock and cream and reduce by two thirds. Strain the sauce, removing all the vegetables and herbs, then return it to the pan. Dice both the butters. Reduce the heat to low and whisk in the butter and smoked butter in stages, to emulsify the sauce. Season with a squeeze of lemon juice and salt to taste, then set aside until ready to serve.

3 To pickle the cucumber, put the water, white wine vinegar and sugar in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Peel and deseed the cucumber and cut into 1cm dice. Add the cucumber to a heatproof bowl, pour over the pickling liquor and allow to cool.

4 Heat the vegetable oil in a large frying pan over a high heat, then add the cod. Cook for 2 min then flip the fish carefully, reduce the heat and add the butter. Once it's foaming, baste the cod for 2 min then turn off the heat.

5 Strain the pickled cucumber, discarding the liquid, and mix it into the sauce. Heat the sauce gently over a low heat – it should coat the back of a spoon; if not, whisk in a little more butter.

6 Serve with a generous amount of sauce and dill fronds.

Leek gratin

Leeks and cheese are a brilliant couple, and this dish sits nicely with a midweek dinner, a Sunday roast or even as part of the Christmas Day spread. I've even been known to spread leftovers into a ham sandwich — don't knock it until you've tried it.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 large leeks
- 4 shallots
- 4 garlic cloves
- 50g salted butter
- 1 tsp thyme leaves
- 35g plain flour
- 150ml dry white wine
- 600ml whole milk
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp grated fresh nutmeg
- 100g mature cheddar
- 100g gruyère
- 70g breadcrumbs
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

Method

1 Preheat the oven to 200C fan/gas 7.

2 Remove the green parts of the leek and slice the white parts into 1cm-thick pieces. Rinse them in cold water to remove any grit, then drain. Thinly slice the shallots and garlic.

3 Melt the butter in a nice wide pan over a medium heat – you want to allow plenty of space for the leeks – then add the leeks, shallot and garlic and season with salt and pepper. Cook for 5-6 min, until softened but not browned, then stir in the thyme. Add the flour and cook for 2 min, stirring, then add the white wine and let it bubble and reduce for a minute or two. Gradually add the milk, stirring all the time. Once it has thickened enough to coat the back of a spoon, add the mustard and nutmeg. Grate the cheeses. Turn off the heat and stir through three quarters of the cheese.

4 Transfer to an ovenproof dish, scatter over the breadcrumbs and the rest of the cheese, and grind over some black pepper, then bake in the oven for 20 min until golden on top and bubbling. Allow to cool slightly before serving, as it will be volcanic!

Recipes extracted from *Home Made* by Thom Bateman (HarperCollins £26), published on September 24

The best alternatives to chablis

Jane MacQuitty

Attention, chablis drinkers. Now that even supermarket premier cru costs £25 a bottle, and top-dog grand cru chablis at least twice that, where are you going to get your dry, crisp, steely, preserved lemon fix from? Surprisingly, the answer is from lots of places.

In a backlash from luscious, peaches and cream chardonnays and their ilk, producers are toning down the oak, alcohol and sugar to create streamlined, limpid, linear chablis taste-alikes with elegance and attitude. Cool-climate, maritime-influenced New Zealand has long produced some wonderfully expressive, concentrated grand cru chablis-like gems. My vote goes to the award-winning Rapaura Springs Rohe Chardonnay, its 2024 vintage a bold, verdant, hazelnut-scented, sea-breezy Awatere Valley wallop, and just 20 per cent of the blend aged in new oak. At £22.50 from Majestic, it's a steal.

If it's the steely, lemon citrus and leafy, green apple flavour of a straight chablis you're after, France is the country to stick with. Tongue-tingly, lemon twist muscadet is gratifyingly close in style. Time to trade up to the sixth-generation vigneron Julien Braud and an organic muscadet from his estate, with its distinctive, steely-stony mineral-rich finish (see star buys).

> “Producers are toning down the oak, alcohol and sugar to create chablis taste-alikes with elegance and attitude

Picpoul de pinet, dubbed “lip stinger” because of its mouthwateringly tart style, is grown close to the Mediterranean around the Bassin de Thau lagoon. Like muscadet, picpoul is perfect with oysters and seafood, but while Domaine Gaujal's is still sea-breezy, it's more crowd-pleasing and less bracing (see star buys).

Don't forget the refreshing, zippy albariño grape from northwest Spain's Atlantic ocean-battered Galicia either. It's riper and a tad fuller than muscadet or picpoul, with more stone fruit in the mix, but good bottles, such as Asda's sparky, apricot and citrus pith-packed 2025 Exceptional Albariño (£11.75), give you a lot of bang for your buck.

Of late, Italy's contemporary, cracking whites have chablis in their sights with their dry, herby style. Try Morrison's 2025 The Best Verdicchio (£8.75), or lap up the light, leafy Alpine 2024 Piccozza Alto Adige Pinot Bianco (Tesco, £12.75), with a lovely lemon zest finish.

2025 Historoots Assyrtiko, Greece
12.5 per cent, Asda, £10.42
Crowd-pleasing yet elegant saline, samphire and lime peel-scented assyrtiko from the Peloponnese.

2025 Muscadet Sèvre et Maine Sur Lie, Domaine Julien Braud, France
11.5 per cent, corneyand barrow.com, £14.25
Wonderfully taut, steely, lemon-zingy single-domaine muscadet.

2025 Picpoul de Pinet, Cuvée Ludovic Gaujal, France
12.5 per cent, yapp.co.uk, £15.95
A superior estate-bottled, austere, floral, greeny-gold, organic picpoul.

2024 La Val Albariño, Spain
12 per cent, Waitrose, £14, down from £18
Dive into La Val's tasty, crowd-pleasing, preserved lemon Atlantic coast albariño from damp, green Galicia.

This week's best buys

2025 Fairview Shiraz-Grenache-Mourvèdre, South Africa
13.5 per cent, Waitrose, £9, down from £12
I wouldn't pay £12 for this bright, ripe, spiced raspberry-charged red but at £9 it's a steal.

Baron Amarillo Rioja Joven, Spain
13 per cent, Aldi, £5.19
Brimming with juicy red plum fruit, young, unoaked joven rioja makes a brilliant autumn into winter swig.

2024 Chiroubles, Elisa Guérin, France
12.5 per cent, thewinesociety.com, £23
Elisa now runs Domaine Guérin, and this mouthwatering, ripe, silky red berry fruited chiroubles is a gem.

2024 Found Marzemino, Italy
12 per cent, Marks & Spencer, £8
Bold red cherry and cherry kernel-licked, marzipan-edged, unoaked marzemino from Veneto and Trentino.

Gtech Cleaning up messes *before* they take over

HT50 Reach further. Cut thicker.

Includes FREE Branch Cutter Kit

SAVE £104.99
Now £169.99
Was ~~£274.98~~

The Gtech HT50 is our powerful long-reach cordless hedge trimmer, designed to make maintaining tall and wide hedges safer and easier. With up to 10ft of reach, a longer 53cm blade and an adjustable cutting head, it delivers fast, precise results without the hassle of cables or petrol.

Weighing just 2.9kg and accompanied by the shoulder strap harness, you can move around your garden without feeling anchored down. Our long-reach hedge trimmer is well balanced, giving you a more enjoyable gardening experience, without the worry of heavy weight.

FREE Branch Cutter Attachment

Take on thicker growth with our Branch Cutter Attachment, which cuts up to 60mm thick, giving your HT50 even greater versatility around the garden.

- **FREE Branch Cutter Attachment.**
- **Up to 60 minutes runtime.**
- **Up to 10ft working reach.**
- **Longer 53cm blade for faster trimming.**
- **Cuts branches up to 25mm thick.**
- **Branch Cutter tackles branches up to 60mm.**
- **Adjustable head rotates through 135°.**
- **Shoulder harness for balanced, comfortable use.**
- **Lightweight cordless design.**
- **No cables. No petrol.**

RATED EXCELLENT 4.6/5 ★★★★½

Order now at **www.gtech.co.uk** *or* scan the QR code

Use code **SJ74** to SAVE £104.99. Includes Branch Cutter Attachment worth £24.99. Now only £169.99 was £274.98. Includes †FREE Next Day delivery. Offer ends 29/10/2026

"We designed the HT50 to make maintaining tall hedges safer, quicker and easier. Add the Branch Cutter Attachment and it becomes an even more versatile tool for tougher garden jobs."

Nick Grey *Inventor & Founder*

Gtech

LOVED by our customers
Over 100k verified *5 STAR* Reviews ★★★★★

†Delivery is free to all UK addresses. All other orders for spares and accessories only, will incur a £3.99 delivery charge. Next Day Delivery UK mainland only (excludes highlands). Visit Gtech.co.uk for full T&Cs.

APPEAL SHADING

BESPOKE BLINDS & AWNINGS

Create the perfect space for outdoor living

- Precision German engineered awnings
- Remote control operation
- Smart sensors extend the awning when the sun is out
- Dimmable LED lighting creates the perfect ambience
- Infrared heating keeps you warm into the night
- Up to 26 square metre area
- **New** Pergola Top – a fully retractable sunshade for your pergola or glass room.

For a colour brochure
call **0800 975 5757**, visit **appealshading.co.uk**
or scan the **QR code** for more info

Also available: smart blinds & insect screens

Was ~~£165~~
NOW £79.50
LESS THAN HALF PRICE!

Luxurious Pure Cashmere

Wonderfully Soft, Warm & Elegant

There's never been a better time to invest in this gorgeous pure cashmere shirt collar sweater. Wonderfully soft and warm to the touch, guaranteed to add luxury and style to just about anything in your wardrobe.

Lipstick

Style C106 Heather Shirt Collar

Was ~~£165~~ **NOW £79.50**
plus FREE UK P&P

Available in sizes (chest measurement):
XS (34"), S (37"), M (40"), L (43"),
XL (46"), 2XL (49"), 3XL (52")

Ice Blue | Merlot | Persian | Oat
Harvest | Pine | Lipstick | Dark Navy

Persian

To order, call **01908 522 455**, visit **cashmerecentre.com/tmw83**
or scan QR code. **£79.50 & Free UK P&P when you quote code 'TMW83'.**
Offer expires 12.10.26. 6 Fernfield Farm, Little Horwood, Bucks, MK17 0PR

30 DAYS Free Returns Guarantee

Platinum Trusted Service Award

cashmere centre

Outside

How to grow autumn-fruiting berries: my guide

The hot weather meant blackberry season arrived early. Joe Swift gives his advice on planting them yourself

I'm sure many of you will have been out there picking (OK, foraging) blackberries this summer. The heat this year meant the season was early and, according to commercial growers, a really good one, delivering a sweet and abundant crop. For wild blackberries it has been a mixed bag — they, too, were early, although now they seem to be having a second flush, with plenty still to be plucked from bushes in many areas of the country.

There is some basic foraging etiquette to be mindful of and adhere to. First, never pick on protected nature sites and conservation areas. Second, leave plenty for birds and insects, who rely on them. Brambles are particularly good for wildlife. Take a maximum of a third of the fruit, ideally less, and leave two thirds for creatures to eat and for the plant to use to reproduce. Third, avoid trampling vegetation around them. Leave no trace. And last but not least, be careful of contamination. Don't pick next to main roads — fruit absorbs pollutants and heavy metals from vehicle exhausts — and make sure to pick above knee height in case a dog or fox has done its business there. Yuck!

One way around all these rules is to grow your own fruit at home. The Latin for the common blackberry is *Rubus fruticosus*, and there are many fine cultivars that are ideal for growing in the ground or in a container. Some are thornless, which makes pruning and picking easy, especially if you're growing with kids. Then there are tasty crosses, such as tayberry, boysenberry and loganberry, which each have the blackberry in their parentage and are all delicious.

If you have an apple tree too, there's a pie right there in the making!

GUIDED TOUR ONLY

Costa Rica adventure

September 2026 to January 2028

Get ready to experience the ultimate blend of thrill and tranquility in one of the most biodiverse places on Earth. This 16-day journey by G Adventures balances guided highlight tours with generous free time to craft your own perfect tropical getaway. You will trek through the lush trails of Manuel Antonio National Park, wander misty mountain paths in Monteverde, and marvel at Arenal Volcano in La Fortuna. Immerse yourself in the wild Sarapiquí Rainforest, cruise the navigable canals of Tortuguero, and soak up the laid-back Caribbean vibes in Puerto Viejo, enjoying an authentic coffee cooperative tour and hands-on cooking lesson along the way.

Contact us today to add flights to this package.

What's included

- All transport between destinations and activities.
- 13 nights' half-board hotel stay and two nights in jungle lodges
- Four breakfasts, four lunches and four dinners
- Visit to Manuel Antonio National Park
- The services of a tour guide
- Save 25% when booked by October 5, 2026**
- Times+ members save £100^
  Visit thetimes.com/timesplus for your unique code

Call **0808 291 3001** or visit **thetimes.com/th-costaricaadv**

TIMES Holidays

Terms and conditions apply. *Price shown is per person, tour only (excludes flights) and based on two adults sharing on November 4, 2026 departure. Price correct as of September 10, 2026 and subject to change and availability. Price excludes mandatory local taxes/resort fees payable locally (amount varies by destination). ^£100 off Times+ offer applicable to each Times Holidays booking made by December 31, 2026 with a minimum spend of £2,000 when quoting your unique Times+ code. Visit thetimes.com/timesplus for full terms and conditions. **25% discount applicable to selected dates only booked by October 5, 2026 and is already applied to the advertised price. Offers and bookings are subject to availability, see supplier website for full T&C's. Offer cannot be applied retrospectively to bookings already confirmed. This holiday is sold by Times Holidays as an agent for G Adventures and protected under ATOL 10808, ABTA P8770. For full booking conditions, visit thetimes.com/holidays/terms-and-conditions.

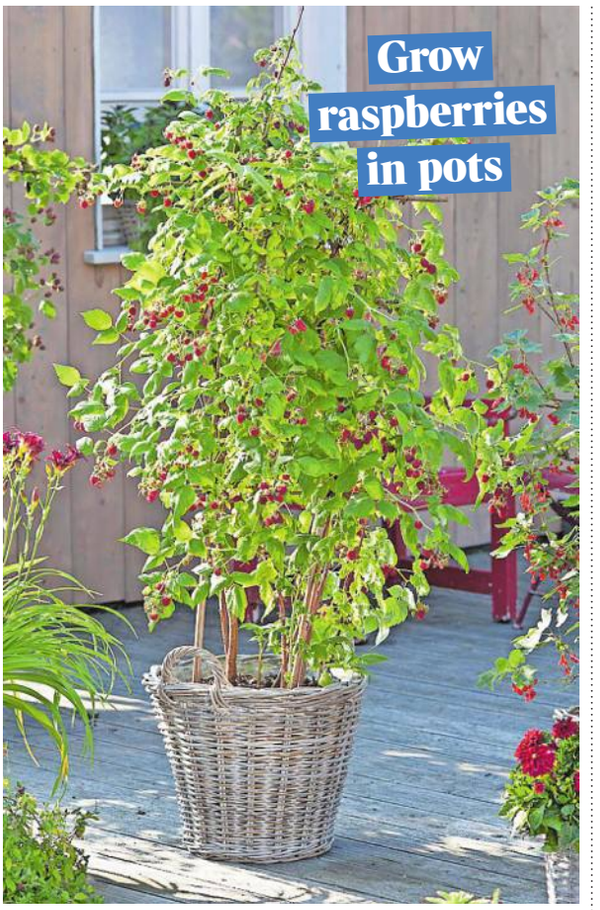
ATOL PROTECTED 10808 ABTA Travel with confidence ABTA No.P8770

FRIEDRICH STRAUSS/GARDENIMAGE; ALAMY

Page 19

'A rocky ascent followed the long, rising ridge to the summit of Penycloddiau'

Jen and Sim Benson's good walk



Grow raspberries in pots

Blackberries

Planting

Buy bare-rooted plants (which are cheaper and generally take successfully) between November and March. If you're planting one or two, container-grown is fine, and they can be planted any time so long as it's not too dry.

The key is to space properly; some are vigorous, so check their ultimate width and plan what you'll be tying it into. This will in turn depend on the size of the variety you're growing and how many plants you're putting in. Most like training onto a wired-up sunny fence or wall, but you can put in freestanding posts with wires fixed horizontally (45cm spacing is good) to keep them tidy and for easy picking. Or just let them grow a bit loose like they do in the wild.

Blackberries grow on most soils but do best on slightly acidic, well-drained moist soil. Prepare the soil well by adding plenty of organic matter. Plant bare-rooted plants with their top roots about 5cm below the surface.

If you plan on growing your plant in a container, plant it in a generous pot and use a peat-free John Innes No 3 compost or equivalent. Water regularly during dry spells, ideally with rainwater.

Pruning

After autumn/winter planting, cut them back hard to healthy buds about 20cm from the ground. Yes, it's tough, but they'll thank you for it. In the first year keep the new stems tidy and tie them into the horizontal wires, like training a rose. They won't fruit in the first year, so keep foraging. Next winter cut back side shoots to about 8cm.

In the second year you'll be up and running. Last year's stems will be trained and fruiting, and new stems will come up from the base, which will fruit the next year. These new stems can be loosely tied together as a kind of bundle, then in autumn the old fruiting stems can be cut down and the new stems trained in. Keep on top of them to avoid a brambly mess, and wear gloves if not thornless. A mess can be reined back into shape by cutting back the whole lot hard in winter and starting again.

Joe's favourites

'Loch Ness' Thornless, delicious and highly productive. Height and spread 1.5m-2m.

'Little Black Prince' What's called a "patio blackberry" and ideal for containers. Almost thornless with sweet dark purple fruit. Height and spread 1m.

'Waldo' Compact plant with large firm black berries. Height and spread 1.8m, so ideal for a standard fence.

'Tayberry 'Medana' Cross between a blackberry and a raspberry, sweeter and less earthy-tasting than blackberries. This one is said to be the best flavour, although it is prickly. For a thornless maybe 'Buckingham' — a similar size.

> "Blackberry crosses such as tayberry, boysenberry and loganberry are delicious

Harvest when deep purple not red. Height and spread 2m.

Loganberry Cross between a north American blackberry and a raspberry. Sharp and juicy, so great for jams. The thornless 'Ly654' is perfect for the UK climate and produces cone-shaped claret berries. Height and spread approx 2m.

Thornless boysenberry Cross between four plants — a loganberry (which is already a cross), American dewberry, European raspberry and European blackberry — which makes for a large maroon berry with a sweet aromatic taste. Height 1.5m height x 2m spread.

Raspberries

Raspberries are my favourite fruit, and autumn-fruiting raspberries (August to October) are easy to grow and particularly easy to prune — just cut them down to the ground each year. With summer fruiters it's a little more complicated — you need to select canes that'll fruit next year. If you're putting an order in for bare-rooted blackberries, why not add in autumn-fruiting raspberries too?

Planting

Raspberry plants thrive in moisture-retentive, fertile, neutral to slightly acidic soils. Avoid soggy or shallow soils and give them plenty of sun. Once planted, there are many ways of supporting them. A single plant can be tied onto a post, but the more you grow the more elaborate you'll want your setup, with a post and horizontal wire (to tie them to) or two lines of wires to contain them and tie them to.

If you're planting a single plant in a container, use a large one filled with 80 per cent multipurpose compost and 20 per cent loam-based potting compost, and tie it to bamboo canes. Keep the compost moist and feed with a liquid general-purpose fertiliser monthly in summer.

Pruning

One of the best things about autumn fruiters is that you simply cut all the canes down to the ground in February. The new canes will start growing in spring, which will bear fruit later in the year. If they get overcrowded, thin them out by cutting some down to the ground.

Joe's favourites

'Autumn bliss' Classic and great cropper. Dark fruits.

'All Gold' The best of the golden yellow varieties.

'Autumn Treasure' Large, sweet berries. Strong disease resistance.

Harvesting blackberries and raspberries

You thought, just chuck them in a bag, or straight in your mouth? Think again. Ideally pick on a sunny afternoon when the berries will be dry. In the morning they may have morning dew, and wet berries go mouldy quickly. Use a shallow container so you don't pile them on top of each other. Wash just before you eat or use them — again, moisture can spoil them. Keep in the fridge for a few days or, if the crumble you plan to make isn't needed for a while, freeze your bounty immediately.

Is there saffron in Saffron Walden?

It's hard to find the ancient plant, says Ann Treneman

I had gone to Saffron Walden in Essex on a bit of a detective mission. Who first put the spice in Saffron Walden, I wondered, and where could I find it now? "It's something of a secret," said the otherwise helpful person at the tourist information centre.

I have to say that my heart did quicken slightly. "Because saffron is so expensive?" I asked. The otherwise helpful person smiled in what I liked to think was an enigmatic way.

My mind flitted to the idea of saffron thieves lurking in the shadows. Already my Saffron Walden Mystery Hunt had taken on the air of a Richard Osman mystery in a *Midsomer Murders* setting. There was no body, of course. Instead what I was looking for was a corm (or ten) of the autumn-flowering *Crocus sativus*. The closest I came to the real deal, however, were some rather small wooden engravings of the flower in St Mary's Church.

It turns out that the person who put the saffron into what was then Chipping Walden was Henry VIII, who acknowledged the town's cultivation of the saffron crocus with the charter name in 1514. Legend has it that the corms came to England in the 1300s, in the hollow base of a pilgrim's staff. Tax records show that it was grown in (then) Walden in 1444. The town became the centre for the spice, grown in small "saffron grounds" or "gardens" and harvested by women and children, whose small hands found it easier to separate the red stigmas from the flowers.

Saffron comes with a legendary pedigree. Zeus slept on a bed of it.

THOMAS LENNE/ALAMY

Crocus sativus

Cleopatra bathed in saffron-infused milk. In medieval times saffron was used mostly for medicinal purposes — in cases of smallpox, plague, lung and stomach disease — with only the richest households using it in cooking. Its reduced medical use and cheaper imports meant that by 1790 it was no longer grown in the town that had its name. The spice, the most expensive in the world, didn't return to Essex until 2004, when a local man named David Smale was looking for something to grow.

Smale is primarily a geophysicist, but also a farmer. He credits the latter to his parents, who grew carnations for Covent Garden flower market. "I live in Essex, and one day I was in Saffron Walden and I just thought, like you do, 'Where's the saffron?'" It took a few trips to the local museum before he found a file with cuttings and snippets of the history.

He started in his back garden, planting in September and harvesting a small amount (it takes 200 flowers to produce one gram of dried saffron). The second year he planted up a small corner of a field and, from there, his enterprise, called English Saffron, has flourished. At one point he had 100,000 corms. It sends its award-winning saffron to many restaurants and shops.

> "The flowers are harvested just as they were in medieval times: by hand

Saffron farmers are called "crokers". Corms are planted, and flowers harvested, just as they were in medieval times: by hand. One of the challenges is to find land. "I have been nomadic for years because trying to get land to do small-scale specialist farming in this country is almost impossible," Smale says. At present he is using land in Tiptree that is part of the Wilkins & Sons jam operation.

Aha! So that's one mystery solved at least. Now I know that saffron *can* be found growing in Essex, although not in its namesake town.

Saffron prices vary widely, depending on quality, from £2.50 to £30 or more for a gram of threads (or stigmas). The main producers are Iran, Kashmir, India, Greece and Spain, but England has several small saffron farms dotted around the country. Our climate, in general, is cooler and the soil richer, which is thought to give it a more complex and honeyed taste. Saffron, when infused, brings a floral flavour with a slight bitterness, and is used in sweet and savoury dishes. It is also used to flavour gin. Very English indeed.

The corms are planted in August and/or September and should flower within six to ten weeks. The corms should not be smaller than 22cm. After they flower, pick in the morning on a dry day when the flowers open. Pull out the three red stigma threads from the centre. Air or oven dry. Store in an airtight container.

Finally, a warning. *Crocus sativus* is often confused with other types or crocus as well as the "false autumn crocus", or colchicum. Any type of crocus other than *crocus sativus* is toxic and colchicum is highly poisonous. Make sure you are growing *Crocus sativus* with its red stigma.

Send any questions or comments to gardenquestions@thetimes.co.uk

Revel in the very best letters to The Times

The perfect gift for anyone with a shrewd sense of humour.

Now only £8.99 with an additional 20% off available for Times+ members.

Visit timesbookshop.co.uk/timesbooks or call 020 3176 2935

TIMES Bookshop

Free UK P&P on online orders over £25. All orders placed by phone will incur a minimum £2.99 delivery charge. 20% discount for Times+ members, visit mytimesplus.co.uk to access the discount code, exclusions apply.

JEAN WILLIAMSON, MIKE LANE, HOLDEN WILDLIFE/ALAMY

A good walk Moel Arthur and Penycloddiau, Clwydian Range

How hard is it?

7 miles; challenging; hilly, steep in parts

Cresting the summit of Moel Arthur is a true "wow" moment. As we made our way up to the small, cairn-topped plateau in the Clwydians it was as if the Earth fell away on every side. To the east, the Dee estuary snaked towards Liverpool Bay. To the south, distinctive, monument-topped Moel Famau peeked over the closer Moel-Llys-y-Coed. To the west, the precipitous scarp of the hills, sliced through by the Vale of Clwyd Fault, dropped into the vast levels of the vale, running right up to Eryri's thrillingly jagged skyline.

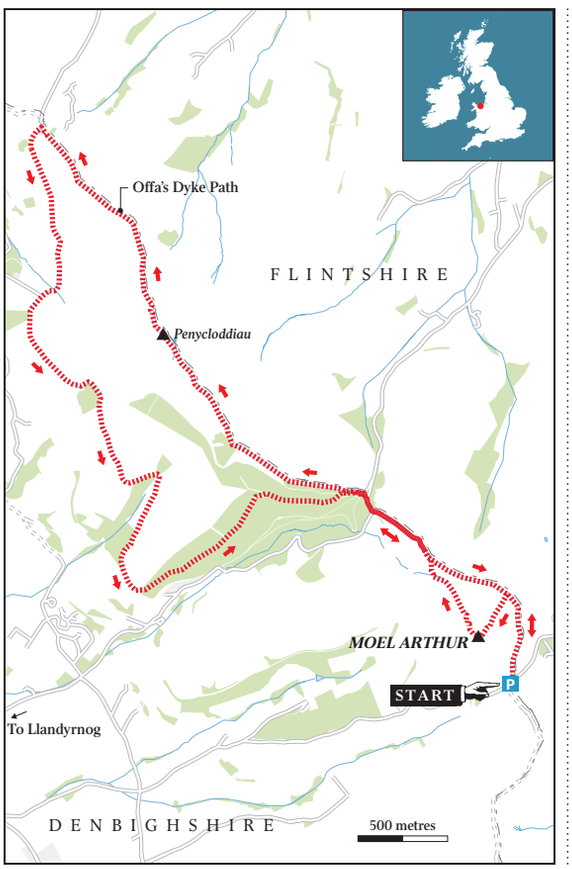
Though diminutive by north Wales standards, this view is the reason these glacier-sculpted hills are home to no fewer than six hillforts, dwelling places since the Iron Age. Evidence of even earlier occupation has been unearthed on Moel Arthur's ditched and ramparted slopes, including three copper Bronze Age flat axes and Neolithic and Mesolithic remnants, the signs of people moving in as the ice retreated.

We left the summit along the knobbly spine of the hills, joining the Offa's Dyke Path that plunged steeply into a valley dark with Sitka spruce, once grown to make pit props — gold mining was (unsuccessfully) trialled on the nearby slopes. A rocky ascent followed the long, rising ridge to the summit of Penycloddiau, another extensive hillfort and grand viewpoint. These tops would once have been wooded with native broadleaf, cleared over centuries for building and firewood. But on this cloudless summer day, the vibrant mix of bilberry, heather and gorse shone in the sunshine, a dazzling display of colour daubed across the hillsides.

Reaching the northern end of Penycloddiau we turned back on ourselves, the track contouring beneath the main ridge, with the gleaming Clwyd running far below. We had intended to continue around the western flanks of the hills but a couple of walkers coming the other way suggested an alternative route avoiding some "difficult" gates. It was a good decision and instead we walked a lovely, winding path through mixed woodland, lush and green despite weeks without rain, rustling with the thrushes and blackbirds that feasted on blackberries, hawthorn berries and rosehips.

Emerging from the trees we found ourselves back at the foot of Moel Arthur. We climbed to look out over Connah's Quay, the haze of Liverpool spreading beyond. Crossing the colourful hillside to the clinking calls of stonechats we tried to imagine how life — and this landscape — must have looked to those who made their homes here so long ago.

> To the west the precipitous scarp of the hills dropped into the vast levels of the vale



Clockwise from main: looking northeast from Moel Arthur hillfort; stonechats occupy the landscape; and heather colours the hillside

Start/finish Moel Arthur car park, CH7 5NZ (OS ref SJ146657).

Getting there Trains to Rhyl and bus to Llandyrnog, then walk from there. Road: minor road between the A541 at Hendre and Llandyrnog, small car park.

Walk Follow Offa's Dyke Path (ODP) up Moel Arthur, detouring left over summit. Continue downhill, rejoining ODP. At foot of hill turn right onto road then left, following ODP up to Penycloddiau hillfort. Descend to path junction at SJ121689. Turn sharp left, following byway to track junction at woodland edge (SJ125663). Bear left on bridleway uphill through woodland to rejoin ODP and outbound route. Turn right, retrace ODP across road and uphill towards Moel Arthur. Stay on ODP, skirting Moel Arthur and descending to car park.

Food Stock up on picnic supplies from Hawarden Estate farm shop or dine at the Glynne Arms, Hawarden ((hawardenestate.co.uk)

Accommodation Gardener's House, Hawarden (07818 246139; hawardenestateholidays.co.uk).

More information Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape (clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk)

Jen and Sim Benson

HOTTER®

The *waterproof*
made for *every* day

GUARANTEED TO KEEP YOU DRY
GORE-TEX PRODUCTS

SAVE £36
WAS £125

THOR II GTX

A bestselling men's waterproof shoe combining breathable GORE-TEX protection and Stability+ support, delivering a secure, dry and comfortable wear for everyday use.

NOW £89

More colours available online

HALF SIZES LEATHER

ORDER TODAY AND SAVE £36 with code **TH36BX**
Call 01695 79 79 79 Mon-Sun, shop instore or visit hotter.com

This offer entitles the customer to purchase selected colours of Thor II GTX at £89, a saving of £36 off RRP with code TH36BX, subject to availability. Offer valid until 12th October 2026. For full T&C's, visit hotter.com/page/terms-conditions

CHADWICK
HANDMADE BELTS

Each belt is created entirely by hand in Yorkshire, using traditional tools and the finest quality British materials.

To see the full range of handmade leather goods please visit our website.

www.chadwickbelts.co.uk

pollock
Homelifts

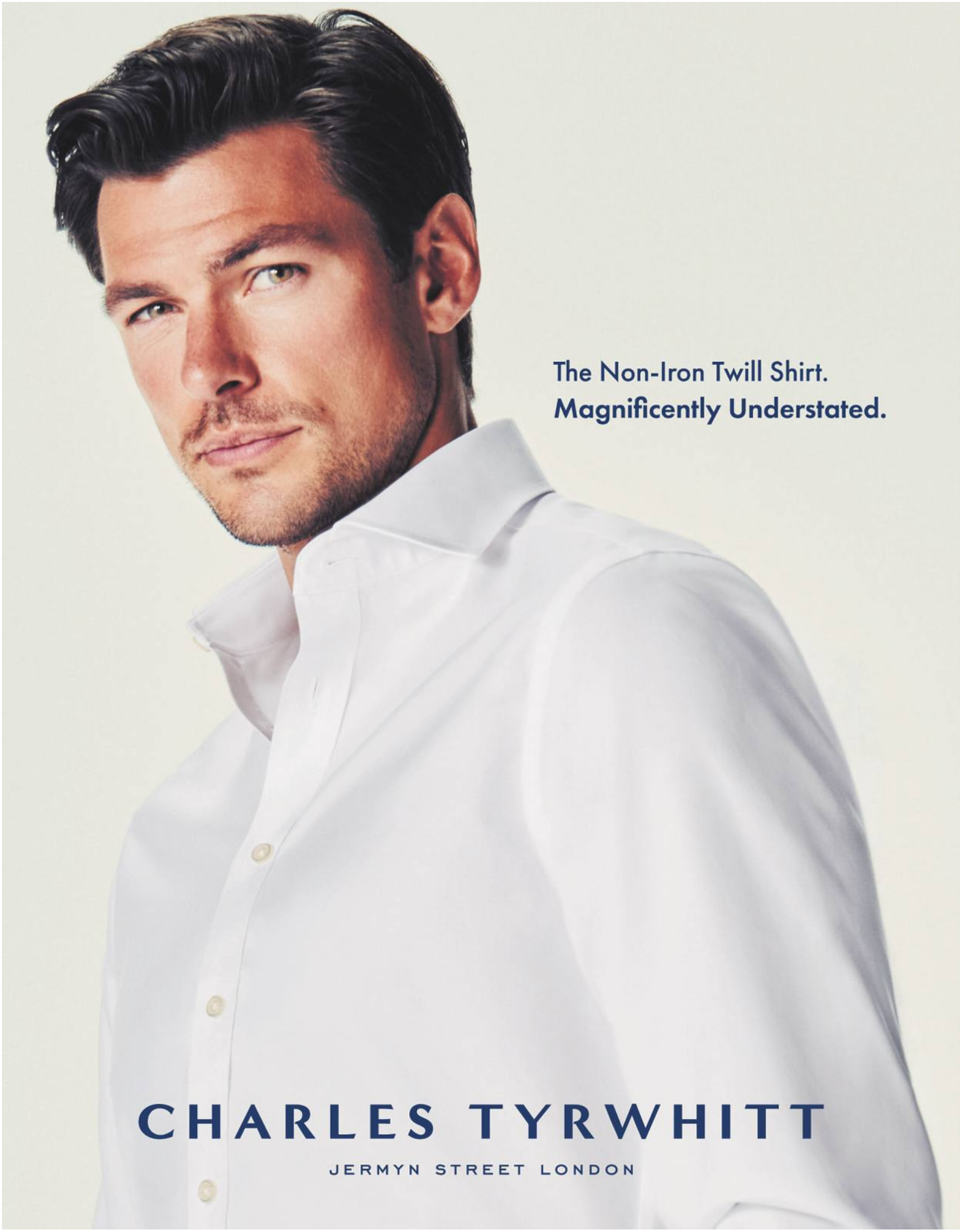
A HOME ELEVATOR. WITHOUT THE SHAFT.

The Pollock Residential Elevator has the smallest footprint on the market. Its shaftless, self-contained design means no bulky lift well and no heavy structure attached to your wall.

Stay independent. Without changing how your home feels.

TRUSTMARK
Government Endorsed Quality

0800 472 5002 pollockhomelifts.co.uk


The Non-Iron Twill Shirt.
Magnificently Understated.
CHARLES TYRWHITT
JERMYN STREET LONDON

Humfree®

Portable scooters. Endless possibilities.

£400 OFF

LIMITED TIME ONLY

A SCOOTER YOU CAN ACTUALLY LIFT

The Connect scooter slips into the boot, lifts out with ease, and goes wherever the mood takes you. Market mornings, park strolls, popping round to see friends – it's all within reach. So… where next?

- **World's first!** Our most portable scooter
- Weighs only 11kg*
- Customise your seat - 5 colours
- Available in 2 colours

**Heaviest part weighs 11.2kg*

Designed in the UK

Quickest FREE Delivery 1-3 days

Longest FREE warranty: 2 years

FREE engineer call-outs

Repair or replace guarantee

Only available at Humfree

As seen on TV

Call today for your FREE brochure and save £400

0800 999 2154 OR GO ONLINE AT HUMFREE.CO.UK

Quote Code: 3726HP4

LIMITED TIME READERS SPECIAL OFFER

A Seven Sock Sunshine Selection

HEEL & TOE HJ SOFTOP® SOCKS

only £35 for a Pack of 7 Pairs

TO GET **FREE** DELIVERY* & RETURNS** Enter **15E37** at checkout

PETER CHRISTIAN
GENTLEMEN'S OUTFITTERS

7 pairs in 7 colours
Heather, Navy, Sky, Forest, Sand, Burgundy, Sage

"Absolutely fab product and were met with critical acclaim by my Hubby. Lovely and bright and no more pinched legs!"
Donna, Isle Of Wight ★★★★★ Trustpilot

Softop® Socks
Your Seasonal Sock Drawer Sorted

The Original HJ Softop® Socks are designed for all-day comfort without compromise. Innovative non-elastic tops keep them securely in place without pinching or leaving unsightly marks—ideal for those with sensitive legs or circulation issues. This exclusive pack includes seven pairs in stylish seasonal colours, available only to Peter Christian customers.

- One size 6-11
- 75% cotton / 25% polyamide
- Ventilated foot panels for cool comfort
- HJ unconditional 6 months guarantee
- Peter Christian's Free Returns & Money Back Guarantee**

ENDORSED BY
INSTITUTE of PODIATRISTS

Order HJ Softop® Sock Pack **(MA89)**
Use code **15E37** for **FREE P&P**

peterchristian.co.uk

Call us 01273 493 393 *Weekdays 9–5pm Weekends 10–3pm*

Order by post – Cheques payable to Peter Christian.
Quote **15E37** with your order and send to: Freepost PETER CHRISTIAN

Go Online or Call for a Free Catalogue

*Free UK delivery (normally £5). Offer ends midnight 12/10/26. £35 Minimum spend applies. This offer may not be used in conjunction with any other offer. **Free returns within the UK only and subject to items being in perfect condition, in their original packaging and returned within 30 days. See our full returns policy online. A Division of Hills of Bramley Ltd. Co Reg No 04767802

vertica
ALWAYS READY

Not every solution for erectile dysfunction is a tablet

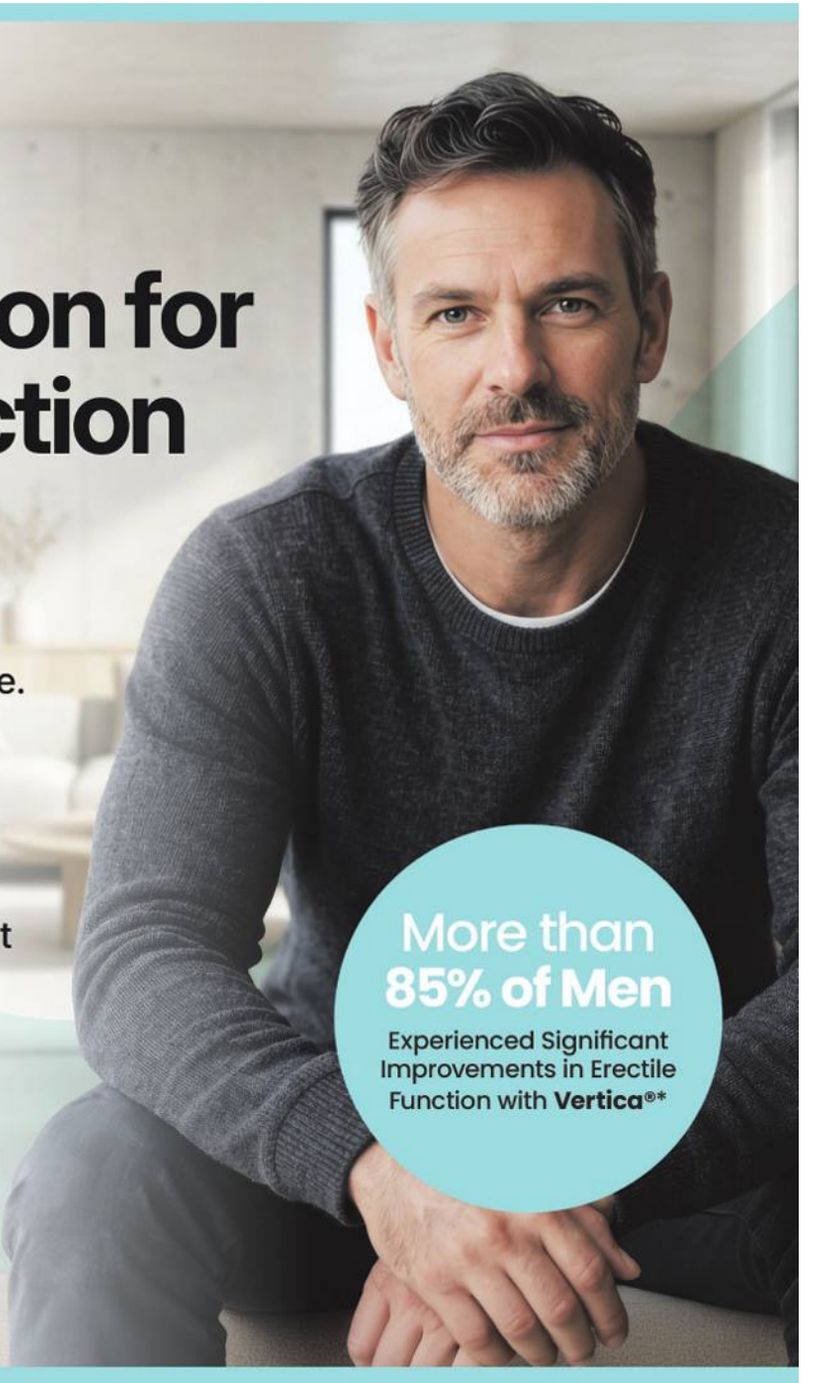
There are now clinically evaluated, drug-free options designed for use at home.

Erectile dysfunction is often linked to changes in blood flow and tissue function.

Vertica is a non-invasive medical device that uses radiofrequency energy to support these processes.

It is designed for use at home as a private alternative to medication.

Save 20% today using code:
HOMEUSE20



Confidential help and support from our UK based team

Try risk-free with our 60 day return policy†

Speak to our experts
0203 769 2937

Learn more
vertica-labs.com

Vertica® is manufactured and distributed by Ohh-Med Medical UK Ltd. Discount code valid on devices only. † Subject to clinical handling fee. * Vertica® is supported by efficacy and safety data from a pilot clinical study published by the peer-reviewed **International Journal of Impotence Research.** The results, based on participants who had ED for at least six months, found Vertica improved matters for 85 per cent of participants.

CE UK CA MHRA

ELITE MOBILITY ESTABLISHED 2000

★★★ MASSIVE ★★★
SALE
NOW ON!

THE EXTREME SERIES
INTERIOR HEATER

Scandinavian engineering at its best
Designed for on and off-road use
Eco-aware electric heater
Rear reversing camera
Central locking and alarm

FOR A FREE HOME DEMONSTRATION, CALL 0800 169 5910 TODAY

THE CABIN CAR STAY WARM THIS WINTER

HUNDREDS OF NEW & USED SCOOTERS AVAILABLE IN OUR MASSIVE SALE

LARGE 13" WHEELS

★★★ ELITE'S BEST-SELLING EASY FOLD WHEELCHAIR & SCOOTER ★★★

EML CARBON LITE POWER WHEELCHAIR
EML AERO CARBON FOLDING SCOOTER
Ultra Lightweight, Car Boot Friendly
Flip Up Arms & Detachable Footrests
Effortless Folding & Storage, Only 11kg

ELITE Mobility
OVER 25 YEARS IN BUSINESS
www.elitemobility.co.uk

0800 169 5910
CALL FOR FREE HOME DEMONSTRATION

Over 37,000 Homelifts Installed

The UK's Original Homelift

Stay in the home you love with a Stiltz Lift from the UK's LARGEST homelift provider.

- CAN FIT INTO ANY HOME
- ENGINEER SUPPORT 24/7
- CAN BE INSTALLED IN ONE DAY
- RUNS QUIET AS A WHISPER
- ECONOMIC TO USE
- WE HANDLE EVERYTHING
- AVAILABLE IN FOUR CABIN SIZES INCLUDING A WHEELCHAIR MODEL

For a Free brochure and no-obligation home survey

0808 258 5123
stiltz.co.uk

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Rated 'Excellent'

Stiltz™ Homelifts

COUNTRY COLLECTION
Distinctive style for Town & Country

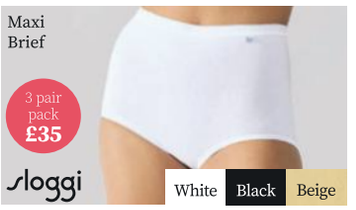
Multi-buy offers on classic sloggi underwear with FREE Delivery

Double Comfort Top
Pull on bra top with double soft under bust band. Day/night wear. 95% cotton/5% elastane. Machine washable.
Sizes 34"-40"
2IU WT White **2IU BK** Black

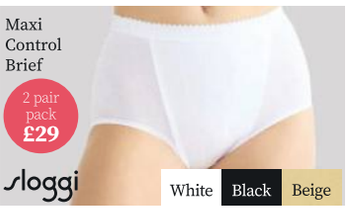
Double Comfort Maxi Brief
Extra soft seamless tubular waistband and stretchable flat lock seams. 94% cotton/6% elastane. Machine washable.
Sizes 10-22
6ES WH White **6ES BK** Black

Romance Bra
Ultra fine cotton pull on bra. Lace trim with added elastane fibre. 47% polyamide/35% cotton/18% elastane. Machine washable.
Sizes 34"-40"- state A-C cup size
3SL White **FT8** Black

Romance Maxi Brief
Feminine briefs with elastane woven into lace, for a perfect fit with soft stretch comfort. 49% polyamide/44% cotton/7% elastane. Machine washable.
Sizes 10-24.
2BW WT White **2BW BK** Black



Maxi Brief
Fine cotton and Lycra briefs with soft stretch comfort. 95% cotton/5% elastane. Machine washable. 3 pairs of same colour. **Sizes 10-24**
175 WT White **175 BK** Black
175 SK Beige



Maxi Control Brief
Comfortable tummy control panel for light support. 94% cotton/6% elastane. Machine washable.2 pairs of same colour.
Sizes 10-24
2BX WT White **2BX BK** Black
2BX SK Beige

Hurry, offer ends 12th October 2026

0333 241 4511 Mon-Fri 9am-6pm, Sat 9am-5pm
Offer code TT247
countrycollection.co.uk
Complete **Freepost** coupon below

Name (Title) _____
Address _____
_____ Postcode _____
Tel _____ Mobile _____
Email _____

Ref	Colour	Size	Qty	Total

Please tick the relevant box if you **do not** wish to receive:
☐ Email ☐ SMS/Text Message.

Please tick if you **do not** want to receive offers from other carefully selected companies ☐. See countrycollection.co.uk for additional information.

COUNTRY COLLECTION
Offer code TT247

Delivery ~~£5.50~~ FREE
Total

Phone
0333 241 4511

I enclose a sterling cheque payable to Country Collection or charge my Mastercard, Visa or American Express card no:

Expiry date ☐☐ / ☐☐ Last 3 digits on the signature strip on reverse. 4 digits on the front of the card for AMEX. ☐☐☐☐

Post to: Country Collection, FREEPOST CE451, Dept. TT247, Craw Hall, BRAMPTON, Cumbria CA8 1BR

FREE DELIVERY • FREE RETURNS • NO TIME LIMIT GUARANTEE

Introducing the NEW eFOLDi Compass.

eFOLDi

Folds in seconds with these 3 simple steps...

10mile Battery Range
Passenger Weight Limit of 120kg/19stone
7 Year Battery + 2 Year Scooter Warranty†
The lightest 4-wheeled scooter at just 11kg‡

AS SEEN ON TV!

GET UP TO £300 OFF*

Explore the eFOLDi range...

eFOLDi Lite

eFOLDi Explorer

Call today on 0800 622 6385
for a FREE brochure or a FREE home demo
or visit us online at eFOLDi.com/TT100

*Valid at the time of purchase for our Mobility Scooters & Power Chair only. Valid until 31/10/2026.
†Subject to Terms & Conditions.
‡Not including battery or accessories.

scan here!

ctsi APPROVED CODE TradingStandards.uk

Wave Goodbye to Bathing Difficulties For Good!

The normal size Walk-in Bath you can lie down or shower in!

- Easy to use handset to remain in control
- Strong reinforced bath shell on a robust steel frame
- Optional powered Safety Seat
- Pop-up waste control
- 100% water tight seal
- Thermostatically controlled taps
- Fits in the same space as your old bath

SALE UP TO 20% OFF**

FITTED IN ONE DAY!*

www.nationwide-mobility.co.uk
FOR A **FREE** BROCHURE CALL NOW ON
0800 316 9798
ASK FOR EXTENSION 66148

Nationwide Mobility

*Based on a straightforward fitting. **Not in conjunction with any other offer. Nationwide Mobility is a trading name of Aquability UK Ltd

SALE NOW ON 25% OFF

Bathe in luxury, comfort and safety once again!

- British designed and manufactured
- Safely lowers and raises you at the click of a button
- Battery operated, no wiring or cables just recharge every 7-10 days
- Belt retracts into cassette for normal bath use for other family members
- Stud walls no problem
- Normally fitted in under an hour

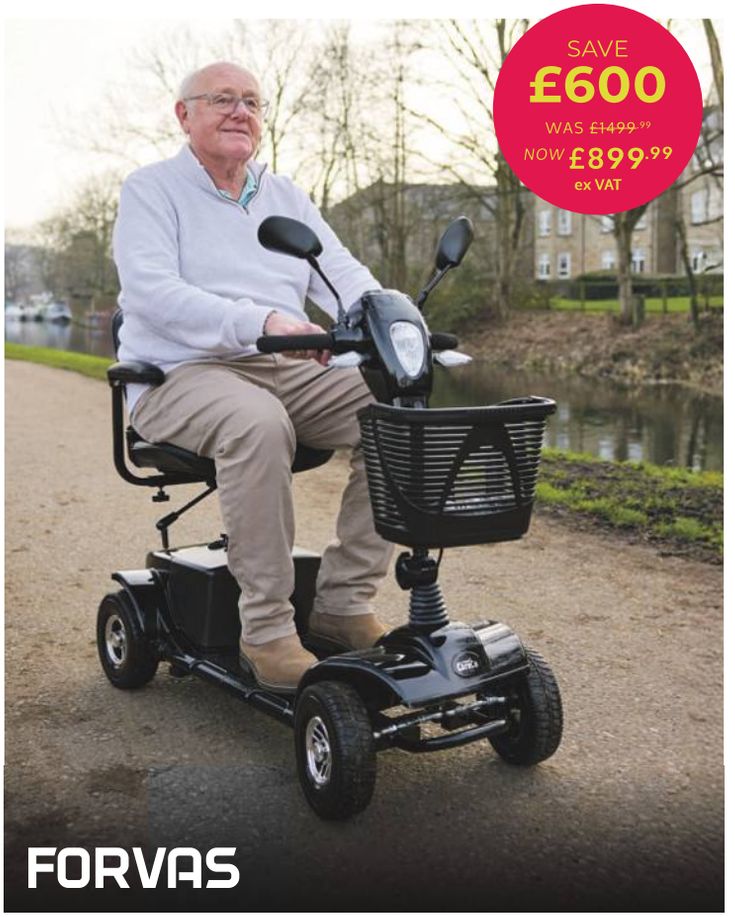
For a FREE brochure call us on:
0800 011 4387

TRY IT OUT! WITH A FREE 'DRY' HOME DEMO

ALSO, ASK ABOUT OUR RANGE OF MOBILITY SCOOTERS & STAIRLIFTS.
Dolphin, Britains household name in mobility

CareCo

Unbeatable offers in your local showroom



Orford Single Motor Riser Recliner **£349.99** ex VAT

Fold & Go Travel Wheelchair **£129.99** ex VAT

41
showrooms across the UK

Expert mobility advice over a *cuppa*

UP TO **HALF PRICE**

SALE

HURRY!

OFFERS END 1ST NOVEMBER

APPROVED SERVICE
Which? Trusted Trader
INSTALLATION, SERVICING AND REPAIR

Test drive a Which? recommended scooter *instore*

SEE THE FULL RANGE ONLINE
visit **www.careco.co.uk/sale**

Free Parking & Easy Access

Free, easy parking in front of the store with easy access and customer toilet facilities available.

Showrooms

Open 7 days a week

EAST OF ENGLAND
Braintree, CM77 7AT
Ipswich, IP3 9SQ
Norwich, NR2 4UX
Peterborough, PE1 2FG
Stevenage, SG1 1XZ

LONDON & SOUTH EAST
Camberley, GU17 0AA
Canterbury, CT1 3RH
Croydon, CR0 3EU
Hayes, UB2 5BE
Maidstone, ME15 6HA
Milton Keynes, MK12 6HS
Oxford, OX4 2TZ
Romford, RM3 0BX

MIDLANDS
Brierley Hill, DY5 1HR
Coventry, CV6 4QY
Leicester, LE1 1SH
Lincoln, LN2 4ZS
Nottingham, NG2 1AH
Stoke, ST6 4SE

NORTH
Chester, CH1 4LT
Hull, HU10 6RJ
Leeds, LS12 1EF
Leeds OUTLET, LS25 4DY
Newcastle, NE21 5TR
Preston, PR2 6NY
Sheffield, S6 2HH
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 2LR
Warrington, WA5 7YF
York, YO30 4AB

SOUTH COAST
Bournemouth, BH21 7PT
Brighton, BN15 0JQ
Eastbourne, BN24 5BS
Southampton, SO16 9GJ

SOUTH WEST
Bristol, BS34 6FB
Cheltenham, GL51 9LX
Exeter, EX2 8QX
Plymouth, PL7 1SR

SCOTLAND
Edinburgh, EH6 7LW
Glasgow, G42 9JD

WALES
Cardiff, CF11 8AQ
Swansea, SA7 9EH

Opening Times

Mon – Fri	9am to 6pm
Sat & Sun	10am to 4:30pm
(10am – 10:30am viewing only)	

*PLEASE NOTE: Prices exclude VAT and are available to those with a long term medical condition. All offers end 1st November 2026.

Trustpilot ★★★★★
Rated Excellent over 70,000 reviews

Call now on **0333 015 5000**
Mon - Fri: 8am to 6pm Sat & Sun: 10am to 4.30pm

Visit our website
www.careco.co.uk

Transform your kitchen with minimal disruption

Save up to 50% compared to a full kitchen re-fit

With Kitchen Magic you can bring your kitchen back to life for a lot less than you might think...REPLACE YOUR DOORS, DRAWER FRONTS AND WORKTOPS FOR A HASSLE FREE TRANSFORMATION!

Our skilled installers work with your existing cupboards rather than tearing them out, which means no emptying every cupboard beforehand, far less mess to clean up afterwards, and a kitchen you can carry on using while the work is happening around you. Most kitchens are completed in a day or two, so the disruption to your home, and routine, is kept to a minimum.

Our team of regional designers will visit you in your home to show you samples, discuss your requirements and prepare an accurate quotation for the work you are looking to do. Every door and drawer front is created in our Midlands factory using advanced technology, measured and manufactured to fit your kitchen precisely, then fitted by an expert team who see the job through. A brand-new kitchen, without the upheaval of a complete re-fit.

That's Kitchen Magic.

5 reasons why you should choose Kitchen Magic

- **No demolition, no mess, just a beautiful transformation**
- **Premium quality bespoke doors proudly made in the UK**
- **Family run business for over 4 decades**
- **Expert design, manufacture & fitting – we take care of everything**
- **Fast turnaround, minimal disruption – your new kitchen from design to installation in as little as 3 weeks**

Scan or call today for a FREE brochure, or to book your FREE home design visit

0800 169 4748 **kitchen-magic.com**

Please quote offer code **TW12/09**, lines open 7 days a week.

Kitchen Magic Limited, Forward Park, 315 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 7DS

Trustpilot Excellent

Kitchen Magic

EST. 1782

sworders

FINE ART AUCTIONEERS

OLD MASTER, BRITISH & EUROPEAN ART

Inviting Consignments until 25 September

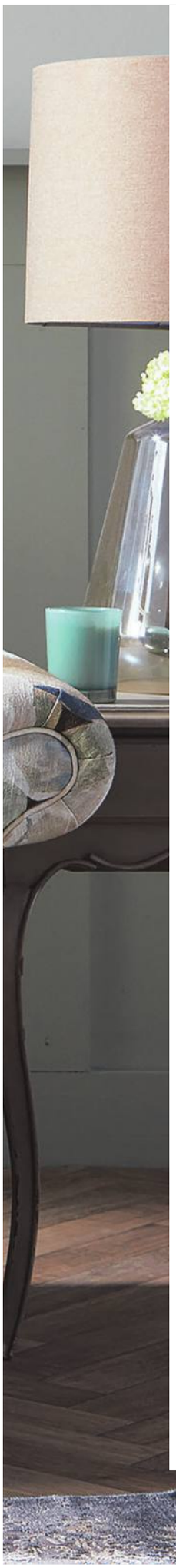
Whether you are considering selling a single painting or an entire collection, Sworders offers expert, tailored valuation advice to suit your needs.

Contact our specialists for a free auction valuation and sales advice.

pictures@sworder.co.uk

01279 817778 | sworder.co.uk

Your Furniture, Beautifully Re-made with Plumbs Reupholstery
SOFA COVERS · REUPHOLSTERY · CURTAINS
Home Savings Event
HURRY · OFFERS END SOON
Bloom - Cobalt
"The company was most helpful and professional. The items for reupholstery were collected as arranged and delivered the same as indicated. We were informed in advance of the date of collection and the delivery. Committed staff, a breath of fresh air." - Dr Mahrokh Dodwell.
Trustpilot
Rated Excellent
0% INTEREST FREE CREDIT*
5 YEAR GUARANTEE



Plumbs

Crafted by our family. Loved by yours.

Enjoy UP TO 20% OFF* Reupholstery

Reimagine & Restore with the UK's Reupholstery Specialists

With over 60 years of expertise, we're thrilled to offer you up to **20% off** our beautifully handcrafted reupholstery service. And that's not all - for a limited time, you can also enjoy up to **50% off** made-to-measure curtains to perfectly complete the look.*

We can reupholster virtually all styles of furniture including: G Plan • Multiyork • Parker Knoll • Buoyant • Christie Tyler • Ercol and many more.

Totally handcrafted, we offer a beautiful selection of quality fabrics from leading design houses such as **Clarke & Clarke, William Morris, Warwick** and **Sanderson**. Plus, we have an advanced Aquaclean fabric range that means stains can be easily cleaned with just water. When you request our reupholstery service, our expert craftspeople, often local to your area, will inspect and repair your furniture, before reupholstering it to its former glory.

- **FREE** local Home Consultant visit, including a
- **FREE** no-obligation quotation and expert advice on how your furniture can be revitalised by Plumbs
- **FREE** replacement seat cushions
- **FREE** arm covers or scatter cushion covers for reupholstery orders

Plus **Free Accessories worth £50** when you place an order.**

Don't miss out, offers end **Next 7 Days.**

call **01772 83 83 83** quoting offer code **A773 TPI**

or visit **plumbs.co.uk** and request our latest brochure with your free fabric samples

NEW!

Preview THE TRANSFORMATION

FURNITURE VISUALISER

Try our new visualiser for yourself today!

- Upload a photo
- Pick your favourite fabric
- See your furniture transformed.

BEFORE

AFTER

"The Plumbs visualiser made it so easy to see how my chosen fabrics would look on my chair. The results were fantastic, and I was delighted with how it turned out. It was easy to use and gave me complete confidence in my choice and in booking a home visit. I'd happily use it again."

Jackie, August 2026

Scan the QR code and start your transformation today!

Or visit **plumbs.co.uk/visualiser**

T&Cs: *Percentage discount varies by design. Ask your Home Consultant for full offer details. **£50 free accessories offer is available when you spend £499 or more after discount. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other free gift or accessories promotion, but can be used alongside most other promotional offers. Offer cannot be used on orders already placed. ▲Our interest free credit partner is Payment Assist Ltd, registered in England and Wales 622544. The registered address is Payment Assist Ltd, Pera Business Park, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0PB. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and entered on the Financial Services Register under firm registration number 622544. Credit is subject to status; UK residents age restrictions apply. Sarah Plumb Ltd, trading as Plumbs, Brookhouse Mill, Old Lancaster Lane, Preston, PR1 7PZ. Registered in England and Wales no. 15978225.

VIKING
Exploring the World in Comfort®

2027-2029
VIKING JOURNEYS

BOOK NOW AND PAY ONLY £25PP DEPOSIT^

OFFER ENDS 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

2027-2028 Worldwide River Journeys

Rhine | Danube | Douro | Elbe | Seine | Main | Rhône | Mekong | Mississippi | Nile

Eight-day journeys from £1,795pp

A Viking river journey is like no other. Sail into the heart of your destination on our intimate river vessels which have all the amenities of an elegant boutique hotel, including an unparalleled choice of all-outside staterooms, expansive views from floor-to-ceiling windows and al fresco dining. Thoughtful service ensures you feel like one of the Viking family. Included excursions provide an overview of must-see cultural and historic highlights. And you can trust that your Viking river voyage is a great-value package, with everything you need included. Come and discover why Viking was voted number one for rivers at the Condé Nast Traveller 2025 Readers' Choice Awards and Best River Cruise Operator at the 2025 Times and Sunday Times Travel Awards. Start planning your journey today.

Viking Inclusive Value

- Return economy scheduled flights from London and up to 10 regional airports
- All onboard meals featuring regional specialities and always available classics
- Beer, wine and soft drinks with onboard lunch and dinner
- One shore excursion in almost every port of call, led by a knowledgeable local guide
- Enrichment lectures and destination performances
- Free Wi-Fi on board*
- Onboard gratuities

TO REQUEST A FREE BROCHURE SCAN THE QR CODE, CALL US ON 020 8780 7992 OR VISIT VIKING.COM

*Connection speed may vary. Offers are only valid on new bookings made between 1 August – 30 September 2026. £25pp deposit offer is valid on 2027 - 2029 river, ocean or expedition journeys. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. All offers are subject to availability and can be withdrawn at any time. ^1 The Promotion only applies to bookings that are accepted by Viking River Cruises UK Limited ("Viking") between 1 August and 30 September 2026 ("Promotion Period"). 2 Bookings will only be regarded as accepted by Viking upon (1) payment of the £25 per person deposit and (2) the issue of Viking's Confirmation Invoice and/or an ATOL Certificate in respect of the relevant booking. 3 The balance of the total price of the travel arrangements booked with the benefit of the Promotion is payable 120 days prior to the date of departure. 4 The Promotion does not apply to bookings with a date of departure within 70 days of the date of acceptance of the booking. 5 The Promotion does not apply to cruises marketed by Viking as "World Cruises" or "World Voyages" or "World Discoveries". 6 Viking's standard Booking Conditions apply in full to any bookings accepted during the Promotion Period (including any additional fees payable in respect of amendments to bookings or flight upgrades), save as otherwise provided in these terms and conditions. 7 Viking reserves the right to withdraw the Promotion at any time but such withdrawal shall not affect any bookings accepted prior to such withdrawal. Price quoted is based on two sharing a Standard (F) stateroom grade on a *Rhine Getaway* journey departing 23 November 2027 flying from London and excludes any loyalty discounts that may apply to booking. All offers are subject to availability and can be withdrawn at any time. Flights are available to/from London and selected regional airports only. The offer price may vary for departures from other regional airports or where departure is within 70 days of the date of booking. The obtaining of any required visas is your responsibility and is not included in the price. Price and availability are correct at the time of going to print but are subject to change. All prices are per person based on double occupancy. Single supplements apply. For full terms and conditions and the most up to date pricing information, please visit viking.com.

WINNER THE TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 BEST RIVER CRUISE OPERATOR

Traveller 2025

ABTA No.V924X

Travel

Page 38

‘As the train snakes from the Venetian lagoon, we lunch on silky mushroom risotto’

Nicole Trilivas takes the train from Italy to Istanbul

ISTOCKPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES; JANOS GRAPOW

Tonnara di Scopello, Trapani province

Sicily in autumn — in 20 trips

Discover baroque hilltop towns, island coves and the best city sites now the crowds have gone, says the local expert

Julia Buckley

A Greek temple here, a Norman castle there. Roman mosaics underfoot, baroque flourishes overhead. Moorish baths, Byzantine mosaics; Swabian castles, Spanish rituals. Sicily has been batted between the big beasts of Europe for millennia and today the Mediterranean’s biggest island is a giant gumbo of the cultures that have passed through.

That’s what I love about Sicily — its history. This is an island that has shapeshifted: the breadbasket of Rome, the strategic outpost of Spain and now a hot travel destination that half the world only noticed after *The White Lotus* showcased its dazzling coastline. And the coast *is* dazzling — all 900-plus miles of it if you include the minor islands. But for me, the real Sicily is in the *entroterra*, the mountainous hinterland whose rippling hills and medieval towns combine all the beauty of the *Bel Paese* with a distinctly Sicilian friendliness (after all, they’ve been welcoming strangers for over 2,000 years). Drop the sniffiness about the often parlous state of the roads — just leave time to navigate potholes — and a journey into the *entroterra* will be the highlight of your holiday. It was for me — one trip bewitched me so much that I moved there.

The Verdura Resort, near Selinunte

As summer bows out, it takes with it the scorching summer heat and devastating wildfires that plagued the island this year. It leaves clear skies, T-shirt weather and still swimmable waters (for mad foreigners, not Sicilians). The crowds dissipate as the seasonal flights peter out (though most seaside towns will stay lively and restaurants open through October) and Sicily shapeshifts back to its mesmerising, slow-living self. Here are some of my favourite places to go.

Great breaks next page

Visit historic Palermo

Sicily's capital is a palimpsest of the cultures that have rolled through: Moorish, Norman, Byzantine, Spanish and — finally — Italian. Go for the blockbuster history: the Palazzo dei Normanni, Europe's oldest royal residence, with its mesmerising Arabic woodwork in the Palatine Chapel (£17; federicosecondo.org); the Martorana Church with its Byzantine mosaics; the forest of carved Norman columns and glittering Byzantine mosaics in the Cathedral of Monreale in the hills (£7; duomomonreale.com). Stay for the city centre oratories and churches, which are baroque and brilliantly OTT. I love the Chiesa di Santa Maria di Valverde, where volunteers talk you through the lashings of marble and stucco. Recharge with a cannolo from the Dolceria di Santa Caterina, which bakes desserts from the recipe books of Sicilian convents (£3.50; monasterosantacaterina.com). Stay at Dimora Tomasi, a micro-B&B of two smart rooms within Palazzo Tomasi Lampedusa, a historic palace rebuilt after Second World War destruction.
Details B&B doubles from £116 (dimoratomasi.it). Fly to Palermo

Great food near Etna

Tourists love Etna for her antics (as long as her emissions don't get in the way of their flights, as happened this summer), but Sicilians love what they call "Idda" ("her") for the wealth she brings them — uber-fertile soil that supercharges anything from fruit trees to vines. The northern flank is gastronomic heaven, packed with restaurants, wine bars and gelaterie. My favourites: Cave Ox Pizza Bar, a trendy wine bar in Solicchiata (mains from £7; caveox.it); Dai Pennisi, a gastro-butcher that cooks on-the-spot lunches in Linguaglossa (mains from £10; daipennisi.it); and Gelateria Santo Musumeci in Randazzo, recently named Italy's best gelateria by the food bible Gambero Rosso (from £2; santomusumeci.it). For a tasting of the famous Etna Rosso wine you need Cottanera, a wonderful family-owned winery outside Randazzo, with a dreamy hotel amid the vines across the road (tastings from £34pp; cottanera.it).
Details B&B doubles from £215 (dimoracottanera.com). Fly to Catania

Greek Agrigento

The ancient Greeks were the first foreigners to colonise Sicily and more than 2,500 years on their theatres, cities and spectacular temples remain. Of the temples, my favourite is Segesta, between Palermo and Trapani, but Agrigento, where the citizens of Akagras built a holy area on a bluff overlooking the Med, is also mind-blowing. Meander through the temples — the Tempio della Concordia is the best preserved but the tumbled-down temple of Zeus is the most atmospheric (£12; lavalledeitempli.it). Add in trips to the nearby Scala dei Turchi — a Colgate-white cliff rippling wavelike towards the sea — and the birthplace of the playwright Luigi Pirandello, who is buried on the clifftop (£4; casamuseopirandelloit.com). Inside the archaeological park, Villa Athena is a hotel that overlooks the temples.
Details B&B doubles from £215 (hotelvillaathena.it). Fly to Palermo

Tour ancient Syracuse

Syracuse, founded by the Greeks in the 8th century BC, is Sicily's most beautiful city. Ortigia, the old town, floats on an islet welded to the elegant "new" town by bridges. It's a dreamland of alleyways, Greek remains (a ruined temple here, Doric columns folded into the cathedral there) and tantalising below-ground time capsules including ancient Jewish ritual baths and Greek tunnels repurposed as Second World War air-raid shelters. The new town is home to Caravaggio's masterpiece *The Burial of St Lucy*, various catacombs and a sprawling Greek city complete with a theatre that still hosts tragedy each summer (2027 tickets from £30; indafondazione.org). You could spend months here and not see it all. Riviera Travel has a seven-night Treasures of Sicily tour taking it in, with guided visits to Syracuse, Ortigia and more.
Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,999pp, including flights, transfers and 11 guided experiences (rivieratravel.co.uk)

Hop around the Aeolian Islands

Seven islands sprinkled across the Tyrrhenian between Sicily and Calabria, the Aeolians are doused in a mythical air. There's Stromboli, an active volcano, huffing away. There's Vulcano, another active volcano, whiffing of sulphur. And Lipari, the main island, whose archaeological museum contains ravishing ancient finds (£5; parchiarcheologici.regione.sicilia.it). Salina, another island, is as pretty today as it was when *Il Postino*, partly filmed there, was nominated for myriad Oscars in 1996. Lipari makes the best base — hydrofoils to the others depart regularly from here.

But nothing beats elemental Stromboli, where you can lie on a black-sand beach and hear the volcano breathe, then hike uphill at dusk to watch him (Etna is a she, but Stromboli is "Iddu" — "he") breathe fire. KE Adventure offers a guided eight-day Walking the Islands and Volcanoes of Sicily itinerary that includes Stromboli, Vulcano, Lipari and Salina, as well as Etna, Catania and Taormina.
Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,445pp, including transport, ferries and some extra meals (keadventure.com). Fly to Catania

Multicultural Mazara del Vallo

Towards Sicily's southwestern tip, you're closer to Tunisia than to mainland Italy, and the gorgeous fishing town of Mazara del Vallo feels like a liminal space between southern Europe and northern Africa. Forget pasta, here you eat couscous topped with just-netted fish. And unlike the neat urban plan of nearby Trapani, Mazara's historic centre, the Casbah, is a rabbit warren-like medina. There are Norman ruins and baroque palazzos carved from buttery-yellow stone, but the real draw hails from further back: the *Satiro Danzante*, or *Dancing Satyr*, a Greek bronze fished from the bottom of the Med. Housed in a church, he whirls around, head thrust back, eyes rolling skywards in an ecstatic trance (£7; parchiarcheologici.regione.sicilia.it). See it all while based at the relaxing Almar Giardino di Costanza Resort & Spa, bookable as a package with British Airways Holidays.
Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,429pp, including flights (britishairways.com/sicily)

Dimora Cottanera, Randazzo

Almar Giardino di Constanza Resort & Spa, Mazara del Vallo

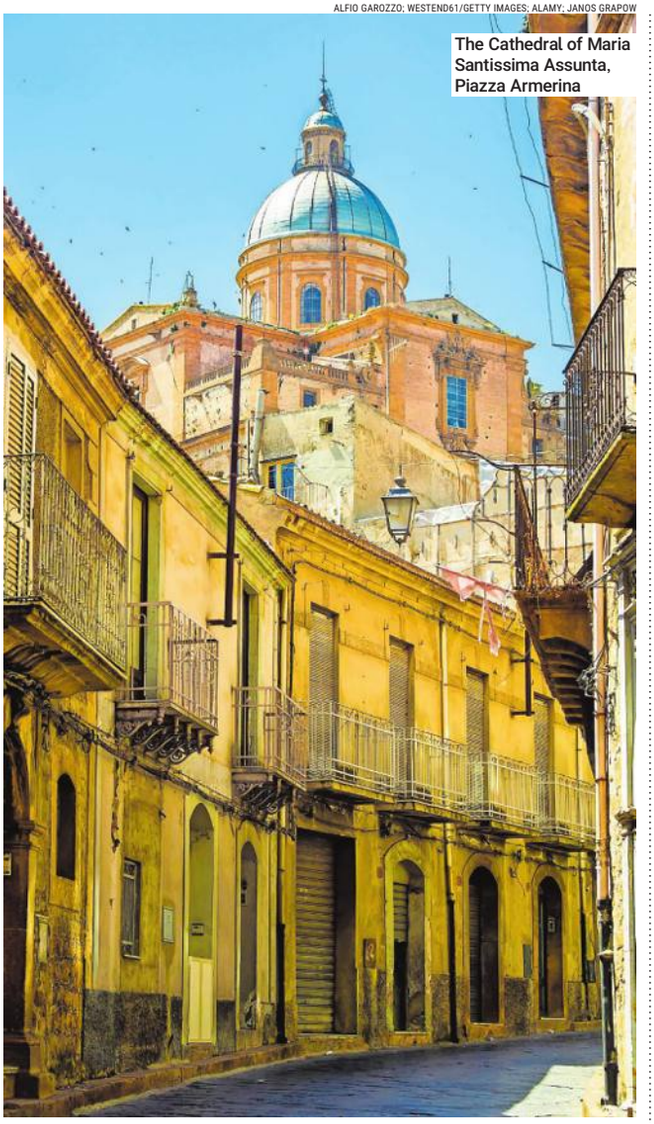
See baroque Val di Noto

In 1693 an earthquake hit eastern Sicily. It was devastating for the population but our silver lining today is that they rebuilt their towns in the modern style: flamboyant baroque. Noto, Modica, Scicli and Ragusa Ibla form a circuit of frothy, honey-stoned cities where each palazzo is more wedding-cakey than the next. Noto is the most beautiful — there's not a stone out of place — though my favourite is Modica, spilling down two sides of a canyon and topped and tailed by two cathedrals. Try the famously grainy chocolate, made by local artisans in the same way since the 1500s. A great villa option is the three-bedroom Villa Angelic, where pale stone walls meet modern white architecture with a long oblong pool, in the countryside outside Modica.
Details Seven nights' self-catering from £4,214, including flights (splvillas.com)

Explore the magical interior

The *entroterra* is a magnetic land of sleepy townlets, knockout landscapes and a taste of real Sicilian culture — it is as far from the stereotypes as it is from the tourist trail. The most wondrous landscape is in Caltanissetta province, bang in the middle of the island. Here, toothy crags sprout from billowing hills, towns clinging on for dear life to the rollercoaster landscape. An hour from Agrigento and the coast, and 90 minutes from Palermo, the small town of Mussomeli makes a good base. Spilling down the hillside, it comes alive with events throughout the year. Summer brings nightly concerts, culminating in the Antica Fiera del Castello, a four-day agricultural and foodie show that takes over the medieval castle with show-cooking and tastings of local specialities, mostly based around the area's tradition of shepherding (think cannoli stuffed with just-churned ricotta).

Caltanissetta, meanwhile, is one of the best places on the island for Easter celebrations. It's home to a gem of a restaurant called 800A for great pasta and cocktails (mains from £9; @800aosteria on Instagram); a screamingly good pasticceria, Scarfia



ALFIO GAROZZO; WESTEND61/GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY; JANOS GRAPOW

The Cathedral of Maria Santissima Assunta, Piazza Armerina

(Via Redentore 27); and an outrageously well-stocked wine shop, Enoteca Lupica (enotecalupica.it). There's a lovely winery nearby called Tenute Lombardo, whose tastings in a vine-hugged farmhouse make an ideal rest stop between Agrigento and Catania or Palermo (from £43pp; tenutelombardo.it). Manfredomus is an upmarket B&B with views of Mussomeli castle and into the valley beyond from the front-facing room, and glimpses of Etna from those to the side.

Details B&B doubles from £77 (manfredomus.it). Fly to Palermo

Venture into the Madonie mountains

Ninety minutes' drive southeast of Palermo, you could almost be in Tuscany: it's all rolling hills studded with cypresses and speckled with wildflowers. These are the foothills of the Madonie mountains, and the gateway to some of the softest landscapes of the *entroterra*, as well as wild mountain peaks. Petralia Sottana and Petralia Soprana are sibling medieval towns — Soprana, one of the Borghi piu Belli d'Italia (a collection of super cute Italian towns), towers over Sottana at an altitude of 1,000m, while the equally pretty Polizzi Generosa perches on a nearby hilltop. You can hike medieval pilgrimage trails or tackle the 1,979m Pizzo Carbonara peak. But to truly understand the Madonie, book an itinerary through the Heart of Sicily, a collective of locals who have designed active, foodie and cultural itineraries to show their area at its best, from olive oil tasting to hiking (theheartofsicily.it). A great place to stay is Antico Feudo San Giorgio, an 18th-century farm turned family agriturismo. Don't miss the incredible dinners made with their own produce.

Details B&B doubles from £86 (anticofeudosangiorgio.com). Fly to Palermo

Escape the crowds in clifftop Taormina

Once a heavenly eyrie perched high on a cliff above the Ionian Sea, Taormina is these days pretty addled by overtourism. Yet denying yourself the chance to step into its famous Greek theatre, with Etna and the sparkling sea as its backdrop, is holiday self-harm. My workaround: stay at the foot of the cliff, in the beach town Mazzaro, and take the cable car (£3) up to the theatre at opening time. Add a ramble through the still-clear streets and you'll see how it used to be — then swing back down for a day on the sand. Plum on the beach and a few minutes' walk from the cable car, Mazzaro Sea Palace is a white, frilly-looking hotel with the prettiest poolside, with parasols and monochrome striped loungers right by the sea.

Details B&B doubles from £792 (vretreats.com). Fly to Catania

Cycle the Sicily Divide route

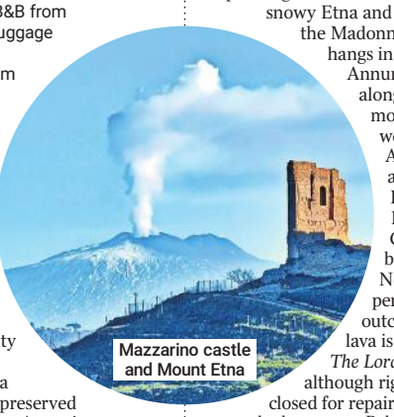
Cleaving through the *entroterra*, the 285-mile Sicily Divide cycle route — crossing the island from Trapani to Catania — winds around mountains, ripples along hills and threads through crag-topping towns that plunge you into the simple beauty of inland Sicily. The local creators of the route have curated a collection of trustworthy bike rentals and cyclist-friendly hotels to stay in along the way. You can DIY it or book the full package through Sicily Divide: bikes, accommodation and daily luggage transfers are all arranged, so all you need to do is plunge into the magical landscape.

Details Six nights' B&B from £980pp, including luggage transfers and one dinner. Bike hire from £86 (sicilydivide.it). Fly to Trapani

Time-capsule towns and sites of the centre

In the undulating landscape 18 miles south of Enna, a pretty hilltop university city in the centre of the island, there arises a mirage: a perfectly preserved baroque town, Piazza Armerina, where honeyed buildings squeeze the narrow streets as you ascend to the heavenly cathedral. This is as beautiful as Sicily gets, but few make it up here because they're all down below in the valley. You can't blame them — the Villa Romana del Casale, a Roman country estate, is mind-blowing. It's carpeted with mosaics, and cantilevered walkways lead you over them — crocodiles and tigers here, female athletes wearing incongruous bikinis there (£15; villaromanadelcasale.it). Divert southwest to Caltagirone for some of Sicily's famous pottery, or due south to the beach at Gela. If you're going east, call in at its little sibling, the Villa Romana del Tellaro, near Noto. Its barely there ruins are hidden under a farm, but a single section of mosaics, including images of the Trojan War and a lively tiger hunt, make the visit worthwhile (£5; parchiarcheologici.regione.sicilia.it). A guided 14-night Sicily in Depth group tour with Explore! focuses on history and archaeology, including visits to Piazza Armerina, Agrigento, Syracuse and Giardini Naxos, with a Sicilian archaeologist as a group guide.

Details Fourteen nights' B&B from £3,395pp, including excursions and guide (explore.co.uk). Fly to Catania



Mazzarino castle and Mount Etna

Renaissance art in Paterno

Sicily is masterful at hiding her treasures. Paterno, balancing on Etna's flank, 30 minutes' drive northwest of Catania, is a case in point. The Renaissance painter Sofonisba Anguissola, who inspired Caravaggio and Van Dyck, spent six years in the now sleepy town and donated a painting to a local monastery. Rediscovered in 1995, the painting — which seems to show a snowy Etna and Catania behind the Madonna and Child — hangs in the Santissima Annunziata church alongside another, more damaged work by Anguissola and a newly restored Renaissance Madonna and Child. The black-stone Norman castle perched on an outcrop of erupted lava is straight out of *The Lord of the Rings*, although right now it is closed for repairs. You should stay at the lava-stone Palace Catania Una Esperienze hotel, which sits on Via Etnea, Catania's chic shopping drag.

Details B&B doubles from £210 (unaitalianhospitality.com). Fly to Catania

Wine-fuelled Marsala

Marsala, Sicily's westernmost city, has a long history entwined with the British, and the dual memories live on in the sweet wine that Nelson bulk-bought for the navy. Today the area is surprisingly varied wine country. The Donnafugata winery's restoration of its 19th-century *baglio* (fortified farm) is the swankiest place to try grillo (Sicilian white), signature Etna rosso and a passito di Pantelleria, the nectar-like dessert wine from Pantelleria island (tasting from £47; donnafugata.it). If you can drag yourself off the bottle, underneath lie remains from the ancient city (archeofficina.com), while six miles north is the island of Mozia, littered with Phoenician ruins. A package with British Airways Holidays includes accommodation at the Baglio Oneto dei Principi di San Lorenzo, another luxury wine resort, with an infinity pool and a spa.

Details Seven nights' B&B from £2,122pp, including flights (britishairways.com/sicily)

The arty towns of Gibellina and Bagheria

Gibellina, Italy's Capital of Contemporary Art 2026, is a startlingly modernist town, constructed after a 1968 earthquake destroyed the original. The enterprising mayor invited Italy's finest artists of the 1970s to make it their own, so it's dotted with public art by Carla Accardi, Mimmo Paladino and Pietro Consagra, whose humongous Teatro building towers over the centre like a spaceship. There are two first-rate museums: the Museo delle Trame Mediterranee (£7; fondazioneorestiadi.it) and the MAC contemporary art museum, which has one of the world's

Punta Bianca, Agrigento

More breaks next page

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

TAILORMADE TRAVEL WORLDWIDE **020 7938 0207**

CRUISE TRAILFINDERS **020 7938 0209**

FIRST & BUSINESS CLASS TRAVEL **020 7938 0208**

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

Call to talk through your plans and order your *NEW* **TRAILFINDER** magazine filled with offers

TF TRUST

ATOL LICENCE: 1458 caa.co.uk

Trustpilot

No.1 TOUR OPERATOR

Which? Awards 2026 BRAND OF THE YEAR

IATA

CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED

FIND YOUR OPEN ROAD...

Highway to Hemingway, USA
10 nights from **£2,599**◊
Plus USD 389pp payable locally
Direct flights, 3★ to 4★ hotels, 9 days car hire and Miami 2 Day Hop-on Hop-off Bus Tour
• Drive along the spectacular Overseas Highway at the Florida Keys • Explore Miami's eclectic neighbourhoods • Enjoy a tranquil, tropical getaway on the sandy beaches

Best of New Zealand
20 nights from **£4,399**◊
Plus NZD 100pp payable locally
Flights, 3★+ to 4★+ hotels, Auckland City Tour, 17 days car hire, Tongariro Crossing Guided Hike, Interislander Ferry, Kaikōura Whale Watch Cruise, TranzAlpine rail journey, Milford Sound Day Tour and 3 meals
• See the volcanic marvels in Rotorua

Australia's East Coast Explorer
23 nights from **£2,749**◊
Flights, 1 night Cairns hotel, 20 nights motorhome hire sleeping up to 3 incl unlimted mileage and 2 nights 4★+ Sydney hotel
• Travel the captivating East Coast from top to bottom • Take in the Whitsunday Islands, Great Barrier Reef and Byron Bay • Marvel at the iconic sights of Sydney

TF'S TOP PICK
2 Week South Africa Holiday incl Safari £1,999

FIND YOUR NEW THAILAND & SOUTH EAST ASIA BROCHURE...

Singapore & Bali
14 nights from **£2,499**†
Flights, 4 nights 4★+ Singapore hotel, Night Safari, Singapore City Tour, 5 nights 4★+ Ubud hotel, 5 nights 5★ Bali beach resort, breakfast and private transfers
• Witness the breathtaking light show at Gardens by the Bay • Escape to Sentosa Island for lush tropical nature or sun-soaked beaches
***SPECIAL OFFER** 10% room discount and 1 FREE night – saving over £350 per couple*

Essential Vietnam & Cambodia
17 nights from **£2,399**◊
Flights, 1 night pre-tour hotel and 17 day guided small group adventure tour incl 14 nights hotels, 1 night junk boat, 1 night sleeper train, shared transport, tour leader, activities/excursions & 20 meals and private transfers
• Opt to take a boat cruise through the villages, islands, and markets of the Mekong Delta

Best of Thailand & Malaysia Cruise
12 nights from **£2,799**~
Flights, 3 nights 4★ Singapore hotel incl breakfast, 9 night Celebrity cruise incl full board, Classic Drinks Package and wi-fi and private transfers
• Singapore • Phuket, Thailand • Langkawi, Malaysia • Penang • Port Klang • Singapore
***SPECIAL OFFER** Room discount – saving over £100 per couple*

Highlights of Thailand by Road and Rail
14 nights from **£2,899**◊
Flights, 3 nights 4★ Bangkok hotel incl breakfast, 1 night sleeper train, 3 nights Khanom beach resort incl breakfast, 3 nights 500 Rai Floating Resort incl full board, 4 nights 4★ Krabi beach resort incl breakfast and transfers
SPECIAL OFFER Room discount – saving over £200 per couple

FIND YOUR HOLIDAY INSPIRATION...

Best of Canada's West
15 nights from **£2,849**◊
Plus CAD 84pp payable locally
Direct flights, 3★ to 4★+ hotels, 14 days car hire and Vancouver Island ferry transfers
• Be amazed by the turquoise lakes and epic scenery in the Rockies • Visit wineries in the Okanagan Valley
***SPECIAL OFFER** Room discounts – saving over £350 per couple*

Classic Italy by Rail
6 nights from **£999**†
Plus EUR 46 payable locally
Direct flights, 4★ hotels, Skip the Line Vatican Museum & Sistine Chapel Morning Tour, Learn to Make Pizza & Gelato, Cicchetti & Wine Tour, First Class trains and breakfast
• Wander the beautiful streets of Florence • Explore the majestic waterways of Venice

Ultimate Family Adventure – Costa Rica
13 nights from **£3,299***
Flights and 14 day private tour incl 13 nights hotels, private vehicle & guide, shared activities/excursions & 18 meals
• Walk through the rainforest canopy on Arenal's hanging bridges • Float along the tranquil Peñas Blancas River
Priced for the Summer 2027 Holidays

Classic Sri Lanka & Beach
15 nights from **£2,249**◊
Flights, 9 day private tour incl 8 nights 3★ to 4★ hotels, private driver/guide, selected sightseeing & breakfast and 7 nights 4★ beach resort incl breakfast & private airport transfer
• Discover the historic sights of the Cultural Triangle
***SPECIAL OFFER** Room discount – saving over £250 per couple*

THE ORIGINAL FLIGHT EXPERTS

WHEREVER AND WHENEVER... TRUST TRAILFINDERS TO TAKE CARE OF YOU

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
LONDON KENSINGTON	020 7938 3939	020 7938 3444
LONDON CITY	020 7628 7628	020 7628 2345
LONDON CANARY WHARF	020 7147 5300	020 7147 5344
LONDON WEST END	020 7408 9000	020 7408 9044
LONDON EALING	020 8799 0400	020 8799 0447
LONDON RICHMOND	020 8799 0444	020 8799 0445
LONDON KINGSTON	0204 613 6000	0204 613 6044
ABERDEEN	01224 578 600	01224 578 644
BATH	01225 724 000	01225 724 044
BELFAST	028 9027 1888	028 9027 1844
BIRMINGHAM	0121 236 1234	0121 236 3444
BOURNEMOUTH	01202 411 600	01202 411 644
BRIGHTON	01273 715 500	01273 715 544
BRISTOL	0117 929 9000	0117 929 1036
CAMBRIDGE	01223 461 600	01223 448 188
CANTERBURY	01227 865 700	01227 865 744
CARDIFF	02920 726 600	02920 726 644
CARLISLE	01228 471 100	01228 471 044
CHELMSFORD	01245 961 400	01245 961 361
CHELTENHAM	01242 437 372	01242 437 384
CHESTER	01244 888 777	01244 888 744
EDINBURGH	0131 243 2800	0131 243 2844
EXETER	01392 458 200	01392 458 244
GLASGOW	0141 353 2224	0141 353 2400
GUILDFORD	01483 478 400	01483 478 444
LEEDS	0113 246 2200	0113 246 2244
LIVERPOOL	0151 221 9500	0151 221 9544
MANCHESTER	0161 839 6969	0161 839 3434
MILTON KEYNES	01908 348 400	01908 348 348
NEWCASTLE	0191 261 2345	0191 261 7344
NORWICH	01603 216 216	01603 216 244
NOTTINGHAM	0115 948 7700	0115 948 7744
OXFORD	01865 261 000	01865 261 044
READING	0118 334 6500	0118 334 6544
SHEFFIELD	0114 349 9200	0114 349 9191
SOLIHULL	0121 716 9000	0121 716 8999
SOUTHAMPTON	0238 251 4920	0238 251 4940
ST ALBANS	01727 807 700	01727 807 744
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	01892 347 180	01892 347 200
WINCHESTER	01962 798 500	01962 798 444
WINDSOR	01753 297 400	01753 297 444
WORCESTER	01905 349 555	01905 349 600
YORK	01904 942 900	01904 942 899

SPECIALIST TEAMS

CRUISE SPECIALISTS	020 7084 6502
CORPORATE TRAVEL	020 7368 1499
GROUP TRAVEL	020 7938 3858
TRAVEL INSURANCE	020 7408 9005
VISA & PASSPORT SERVICE	020 7368 1504
WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS	020 7408 9008
GAP YEAR & STUDENT TRAVEL	020 7084 6530
PRIVATE TOURING	020 7084 6504

Calls may be recorded for accuracy & training

NO.1 FOR FLIGHTS ON TRUSTPILOT – HERE'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN SAYING

"Lauren was so helpful in getting us a better price for our flights by moving our dates around. Saved us over £1,000! Great service."

★★★★★

- All flights include at least 20kg of baggage.
- 24/7/365 support from a person based in the UK, not a chat-bot. Often solving problems before you knew they existed.
- The average booking is impacted by 2 schedule changes. We address this without stress or cost to you.

More Flight Offers & Information

	Economy	Business
Bangkok	£399	£1,744†
Washington	£577◊	£1,999#
Tokyo	£588†	£2,787#
Sri Lanka	£589†	£1,859#
Maldives	£589◊	£2,281#
Cape Town	£656#	£2,499†
Cancun	£685#	£2,361†
Brisbane	£699#	£4,473†
Vancouver	£775	£3,099~
Auckland	£899#	£3,977#

CALL FOR ANY DESTINATION OR ROUTING

NO ONE LOOKS AFTER YOU BETTER

Prices are per person based on twin share including flights from London (call for details), are subject to availability & valid for selected departures in the next 6 weeks except #24 Oct - 15 Dec 26 †7 Jan - 31 Mar 27 ◊1 Apr - 30 Jun 27 ~30 Aug - 30 Nov 27. *Price based on 2 adults & 2 children under 12 travelling. Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel. Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel. Prices exclude any applicable local taxes and fees. All information correct at time of going to print on 10 Sep 26.

ISTOCKPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY

Cefalu harbour

largest Mario Schifano collections (£6; macgibellina.it). The ruins of the first Gibellina, half an hour's drive away, were carpeted in concrete and turned into land art by Alberto Burri (walking through the calcified "streets" is surprisingly emotional). Bagheria, near Palermo, is great for modern art too. The Museo Guttuso houses sumptuous works by Renato Guttuso and other Sicilians, including the Oscar-winning director Giuseppe Tornatore's photography (£5; museoguttuso.com). You could hole up at a three-bedroom modernist self-catering pad through Coolstays. Villa on the Sea has its own rocky cove on the wild coast beyond Bagheria.

Details Seven nights' self-catering from £2,135 (coolstays.com). Fly to Palermo

Zingaro nature reserve

Sicily's coastline is a magical mix of mountains plunging towards the Med, thick sands, pebbly shores and pretty islets. The coast is dotted with nature reserves, where the beaches are as pristine as the crystalline waters. Easily reached from Trapani and Palermo, the Riserva dello Zingaro is perhaps the most beautiful: a bird and plant-filled paradise with heavenly coves dotted along the four-mile coastal footpath (there are beaches within 20 to 30 minutes' walk from each entrance). Cala Tonnarella dell'Uzzo is the best loved, while the rocky Cala della Disa is relatively empty in the afternoon when the sun disappears behind the mountaintop (£4.30; riservazingaro.it). Original Travel by Voyageurs du Monde has a ten-night self-drive Slow Sicily itinerary that goes from Palermo to Zingaro then on to Trapani, Selinunte, Marsala and more before heading east to Ragusa.

Details Ten nights' B&B from £3,000pp, including flights, transfers, car hire and private guides (originaltravel.co.uk)

Hit the beach on the Egadi islands

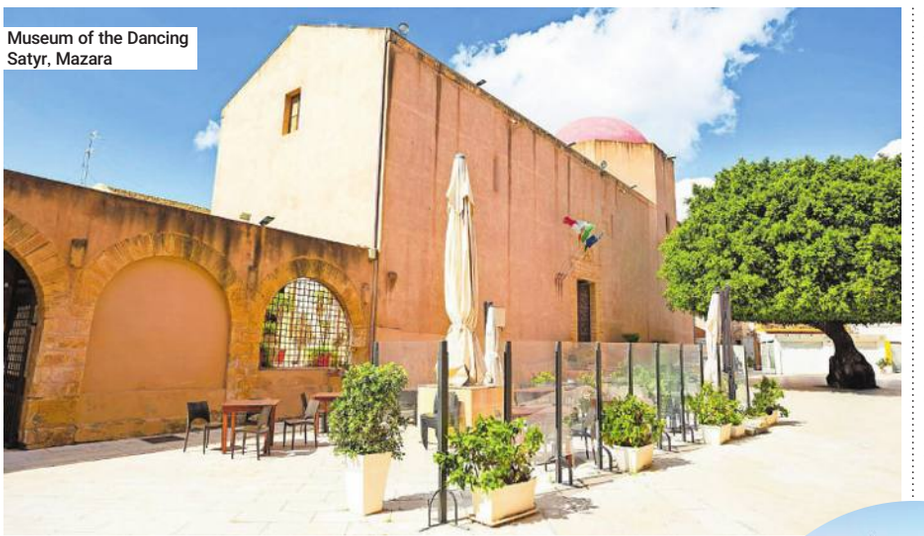
Where can match Sicily's beaches? Why, the Egadi islands, floating offshore from Trapani in the wild west. Here the waters are so pure in their turquoise and jade that they almost short-circuit your brain. Luckily it is the perfect place for a recovery lie-down. Cala Rossa, on Favignana, is the most famous beach, where a cubist Roman quarry plunges into the waters. The island of Levanzo has the snorkeller's paradise Cala Fredda en route to the Grotta del Genovese, a precious cave with 10,000-year-old art (from £19; grottadelgenovese.it). Marettimo, meanwhile, has the remains of a Roman garrison. Don't miss laid-back, lovely Trapani or its sibling Erice, a once Carthaginian mountain stronghold. I'd plump for a stay at the Dimora Cala del Pozzo on Favignana, where excursions can include a boat trip, a cooking class and a donkey trek if booked through Cognoscenti Travel.

Details Six nights' B&B from £2,190pp, including transfer by hydrofoil, car hire and excursions (cognoscentitravel.com). Fly to Trapani

The Nebrodi mountains of the north

Erupting along the northern coast between Cefalu and Milazzo, the mountainous Parco dei Nebrodi is Sicily's largest protected area, a place of peaks (up to 1,847m), ancient villages and the famous Nebrodi black pig, whose meat you'll spy on the fanciest menus islandwide. San Marco d'Alunzio is a timeline of Sicilian history, with Greek, Norman, byzantine and baroque remains; Troina is one of the "Borghi piu belli d'Italia" (the most beautiful villages in Italy). On the coast, the ancient city of Tindari has Greek and Roman ruins, and nearby Spiaggia di Marinello is a gorgeous pebbly beach, while chocolate-box Cefalu is one of Sicily's most delectable coastal towns, with its Norman cathedral capped with glittering mosaics, a bijou beach and the fascinating Tempio di Diana, probably a fortress-temple from the 9th century BC. Try the four-bedroom Villa Panarea, in Rodi Milici, with a sea-view saltwater pool, outdoor kitchen and a whirlpool overlooking the coast from the Nebrodi mountains, available through Wish Sicily.

Details Seven nights' self-catering from £3,597 (wishsicily.com). Fly to Palermo



Museum of the Dancing Satyr, Mazara

Tasteful seaside resort of Sciacca

Beautiful beach towns are two a penny on the Med's biggest isle, but Sciacca, on the southern coast, is also beautifully laid-back. A baroque town with sweeping views of the water, it's where Sicilians go for tasteful seaside weekends. Agrigento is an easy drive away, but make time for Selinunte, a Greek city with no fewer than seven temples, 40 minutes' drive away (£12; parchiarcheologici.regione.sicilia.it). Twenty minutes outside the town, the Verdura Resort, a Rocco Forte hotel, has pools, a spa and golf courses, plus rooms and suites in discreet blocks sprinkled along the seafront.

Details B&B doubles from £344 (roccofortehotels.com). Fly to Palermo

A country cooking school

Sicilian cuisine is a broth of the cultures that have moved through the island — the renowned sweet-savoury flavours come from the Arab occupation, as do many desserts, including cannoli. Foodies should make a pilgrimage to one of Italy's best cooking schools, Anna Tasca Lanza, founded in 1989 by aristocratic Anna, who wanted to preserve traditions, and run by her energetic daughter Fabrizia. Here, in the middle of the rolling wheatfields of central Sicily, you can choose from a days-long immersion course or a half-day "lunch lesson", where you'll eat your morning's efforts (from £215pp; anna tascalanza.com). In the afternoon you might taste the efforts of Fabrizia's relatives, the highly regarded Tasca D'Almerita wine dynasty, at the nearby Tenuta Regaleali, where you can stay (tastings from £52pp; tascadalmerita.it).

Details Half-board doubles from £469 (tascadalmerita.it). Fly to Palermo

Villa Bonnano public gardens, Palermo

Luxury Balkans

My epic train trip from Venice to Istanbul

A nostalgic journey aboard a plush sleeper is a magical way to see this corner of Europe. By Nicole Trilivas

On a wet night, on a train somewhere deep in the Serbian countryside, with a dry martini in hand, I can't help but feel I am experiencing something magical.

Trains — especially nostalgia-inducing private sleeper trains like this one — transport you to a different era. Out of all the spiffy new sleeper trains hitting the rails of late (see the new high rollers from Belmond and Orient Express), Golden Eagle Luxury Trains' Danube Express is neither the newest nor the most aesthetically pleasing, but I can't argue with what's outside the window. Croatian hillsides gilded in extravagant morning light. A heavy-green Bosnian horizon punctuated with minarets. Wide, flat fields unfurled carpet-like before Bulgaria's Rhodope mountains.

The dining car

No, it's not the most luxurious train, despite the roughly £20,000-a-head price for this trip, but I'd argue it is the most spoiling way to see this curious corner of Europe, starting in Venice and ending in Istanbul, while chugging through Bulgaria and former Yugoslav countries — including Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and — along the way. It's why my fellow 40-odd passengers and I have climbed aboard this hotel on wheels for the 11-night trip: we want the Balkans but we want it in comfort.

"I've done river cruises and cruises along the coast but nothing goes inland like this," one guest tells me when I ask what made her choose the Balkan Explorer journey, which has been running for a decade. Like many of us, she's impressively well travelled but had never been to the Balkan peninsula. And now feels like the right time to check it out, especially since Golden Eagle made some tweaks to this year's itinerary, including adding new stops in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and extending the stop in Belgrade with an overnight hotel stay at the modern-classic Bristol Belgrade, which dates back to 1912.

A private-island hotel stay in Venice

We kick things off with two nights in Venice at the garden-draped private island hotel San Clemente Palace, but the real fun starts when we board the train at Santa Lucia station on the Grand Canal and settle into our en suite cabins. They feature wood panelling, Prussian blue damask curtains and, crucially, a private bathroom with shower (plus L'Occitane amenities).

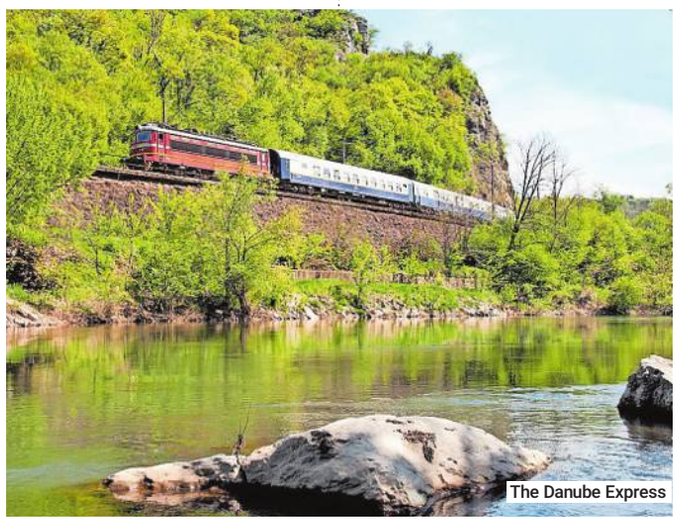
As the train snakes from the Venetian lagoon, we lunch on silky white mushroom risotto and cold pinot grigio in the dining carriages, then disembark for a short loop around the Adriatic port city of Trieste. We're back aboard for a dinner of cool fennel and citrus salad and buttery lamb chops (plus live piano music in the bar car) while en route to Slovenia, the first of the six socialist republics of Yugoslavia to declare sovereignty in 1990. We don't yet get into politics, instead ending the day with a private night-time tour of the spectacular netherworld of the Postojna Cave, a five-minute drive from the Postojna railway station. Another new addition to this year's itinerary, the private cave tour is made even more special by a surprise saxophone concert. The cave's otherworldly acoustics are chill-inducing, with notes chasing each other through the dripping snow-white stalactites.

Once back on board, we retire to our turned-down cabins, where banquette seats have been transformed into beds, and speed into the inky night towards Croatia. Unfortunately, because of rail works we aren't able to make our scheduled stops and tour the newly added coastal destinations of Pula and Rijeka. Instead we spend a rain-dreary day on a plan B of wine tasting in Istria's hilltop town of Motovun. Not a bad alternative, we all agree.

From Slovenia and Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Things start to get especially interesting from here, when Alpine-esque Slovenia and the gauzy Mediterranean haze of Croatia give way to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Bulgaria, which still have that opulent, pastel-pretty Austro-Hungarian influence, only with a more pronounced, obvious Yugoslav and Ottoman past alongside it.

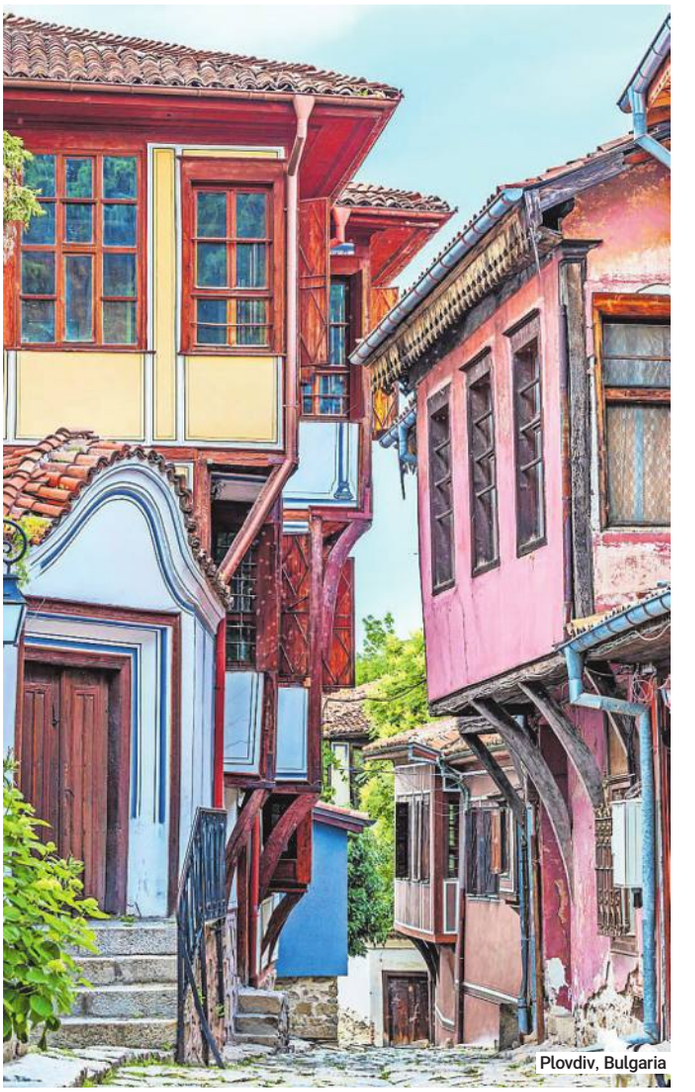
The Old Bridge, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina


The Danube Express

I wake to a steamy Americano brought to my cabin and Bosnia and Herzegovina churning past my window, mosques and sun-catching Orthodox domes now joining the Catholic churches peppering the landscape. Our first stop is in the capital, Sarajevo. We arrive into its main railway station, which is strangely empty, like almost all the others on the trip. In the labyrinthine old city centre, which looks unchanged from its Silk Road heyday, we drink strong Bosnian coffee served in long-handled copper pots in cafés and stand, chillingly, in the very spot where Archduke Franz Ferdinand met his demise courtesy of a bullet from a Yugoslav nationalist, kicking off the First World War. But first we visit the Tunnel of Hope.

Now we talk politics. At each stop we're introduced to local guides. Some are decidedly better than others, notably in Bosnia. Fariz tells us, "I was born in 1998, after the war," as we make our way to the tunnel, hand-dug in 1993 during the Siege of

ISTOCKPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES; ANDREA PETO



Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Sarajevo to transport supplies, "but the stories are all personal, from my family." He tells us about the Bosnian War through throat-tightening statistics but what sticks most are his anecdotes. "My uncle once traded his leather jacket for a pack of cigarettes," he says.

Growing up in the 1990s, my association with much of this area was shaped by that war but it feels like the right time to forge different, positive links in both Sarajevo and the vivid tourist hub of Mostar, about two hours southwest on the train. It's famed for its arched bridge and the steely-nerved locals, who are known to leap from it into the milky-green Neretva River — one of the coldest in Europe, hovering at about 7-10C.

From Belgrade to Bulgaria and the last stop, Istanbul

Next it's an overnight train ride to Belgrade, the one-time capital of Yugoslavia, to see its new expensive mixed-use waterfront and vintage red trams. We drink rakija in the ancestral townhouse-turned-museum House of Jevrem Grujic ("Drink five and you'll get a Serbian passport," I'm told) and visit the mid-century modern train of Tito, the former president of Yugoslavia. It sits in an old depot on the outskirts of the city and there's something strange about sipping Tito's favourite whisky, Chivas Regal, on board from original cut-crystal snifters still stamped "Made in Yugoslavia".

Then it's on to Bulgaria — an overnight journey southeast — for a swift spin of Sofia, seeing only its tidy, communist-era side, all serious and severe. Many of us vow to return one day to properly visit.

Our stops are memorable but too fast and fleeting, just a taste. When I think back on them, I remember them in snippets: a talismanic cigarette left in tribute on the marble-monolith grave of Tito in Belgrade; waxy candle smoke curlicuing heavenwards through cloudy shafts of light in Sofia's neo-Byzantine St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral; a schoolboy playing folk songs on a bagpipe-like *gaida* on the leafy, hilly streets of Bulgaria's second city, Plovdiv.

My more defined memories are aboard the train. My fellow travellers — Britons, Americans, Kiwis, Koreans, Brazilians, Malaysians — are a delight, as are the sincere, hard-working staff, many from Serbia or Hungary, where the train is based. It's an intimate experience, all of us crammed together like this, and you can't help but make friends (this surprises me, as train travel typically makes me want to stare into the middle distance in wordless reverie rather than socialise, but there's time for both). I wake up giddy, opening my cabin curtains to new countries, and fall into sleep seduced by my unexpectedly comfortable double bed dressed in white sheets and topped with a Hungarian Stühmer truffle. Even the dead-of-night passport checks in cigarette-smoke-filled border stations such as Kalotina Zapad on the Serbian-Bulgarian border feel part of the adventure.

Hospitality comes in various forms, and aboard the train it's best expressed in the food, served on monogrammed china, atop pressed white tablecloths. Ever-changing oven-fresh bread, velvety Argentine steak, caviar-crowned scallops on the half shell atop a pink beach of Himalayan sea salt: I have no idea how the long-time F&B manager Krisztian Szoke and his ace team do it, wizarding up these multicourse fine-dining feasts in tiny, teetering train kitchens. Served by lamplight in two rattling dining cars, every night is an occasion. The tables seat two or four and work perfectly well for solo travellers like me, yet most nights I end up sharing them with others, drifting into conversations that range from the meaningful to the joyously inconsequential. "Small human moments," Szoke calls them. And somehow, here those moments feel easier to find.

After Bulgaria, it's an overnight trip to Turkey. We wake in Istanbul, bustling and crowded and fragrant, and alight for the last time. The spell cast by the train is unmistakably broken (even though we still have two more lovely nights at the saffron-hued Four Seasons Sultanahmet). "I hope your writing will carry the same special atmosphere of the train," Szoke tells me when I leave, "so that people will understand why all of this is so unique and meaningful." I hope so too — but words only go so far. Until you come aboard, it's hard to understand.

Need to know

Nicole Trilivas was a guest of Golden Eagle Luxury Trains, which has 11 nights — six nights' full board on the train, two nights' B&B in Venice, one night's full board in Belgrade, and two nights' B&B in Istanbul — from £20,279pp in a twin cabin, including some extra meals (goldeneagleluxurytrains.com). Fly to Venice and from Istanbul. Next tour dates: Oct 2-13, 2026 (waiting list); May 7-18, 2027; Sep 10-21, 2027; Oct 19-30, 2027

BOOK WITH THE TOP PARTNER FOR AMBASSADOR CRUISE LINE

EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION ENDS 8PM 14TH SEPTEMBER 2026

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE EXCLUSIVE NO-FLY CARIBBEAN ADVENTURE

FROM ONLY £60PP PER NIGHT

NO-FLY CRUISING DIRECT FROM LONDON TILBURY

EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF UP TO 50%±

ADULTS-ONLY, TRADITIONAL BRITISH CRUISING

45 NIGHTS DEPARTING 3RD JANUARY 2027

JANUARY 2027

Sun 3	**Embark *Ambience* and depart London Tilbury**
Fri 8	**Ponta Delgada, Azores**
Fri 15	**Bridgetown, Barbados**
Sun 17	**Willemstad, Curacao** Willemstad, Curaçao's capital, is a tropical paradise known for its vibrant, pastel-coloured architecture lining the waterfront. This UNESCO-listed city offers a blend of Dutch colonial heritage and Caribbean charm. Beyond its charming streets, you'll find beautiful beaches, excellent diving spots and a rich cultural heritage to explore
Mon 18	**Oranjestad, Aruba**
Wed 20	**Santa Marta, Colombia**
Thu 21 - Fri 22	**Cartagena, Colombia** (overnight)
Sun 24	**Colón (for Panama City), Panama ★Maiden Port★**
Mon 25 - Tue 26	**Puerto Limón, Costa Rica** (overnight)
Thu 28 - Fri 29	**Belize City, Belize** (overnight)
Sun 31	**George Town, Cayman Islands** George Town blends a relaxed island atmosphere with an upscale international feel. You'll find crystal-clear Caribbean water, palm-lined streets, luxury yachts, and a multicultural population

FEBRUARY 2027

Mon 1	**Montego Bay, Jamaica**
Wed 3	**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**
Fri 5	**St. John's, Antigua**
Fri 12	**Praia da Vitoria, Azores**
Wed 17	**Arrive in London Tilbury**

Dates not mentioned are spent relaxing at sea

SERVICE, QUALITY & TRUST WITH ROL CRUISE

- ☑ **5★ SERVICE, WE'RE HERE WHEN YOU NEED US**
- ☑ **THE UK'S NO.1 INDEPENDENT CRUISE SPECIALIST**
- ☑ **ABTA & ATOL PROTECTED**
- ☑ **UNBEATABLE VALUE**

WHAT'S INCLUDED

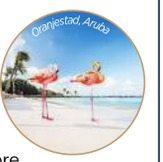
EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF UP TO 50%± - ONLY AVAILABLE WITH ROL CRUISE

PLUS, book by 8pm 14th September 2026 to receive a **FREE** Bottle of Rum+

- **45 NIGHTS** full-board no-fly cruising on board ***Ambience*** including++:
  - ✓ An authentic and traditional cruise experience at a fantastically affordable price
  - ✓ All meals on board including breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner
  - ✓ A wide range of entertainment, including evening shows, plays, cabarets, live music & classical interludes
  - ✓ Use of gym, swimming pool and hot tubs as well as spa access
  - ✓ The currency on board is pound sterling
- **AMBASSADOR GUARANTEE++ – ENJOY YOURSELF ON YOUR FIRST AMBASSADOR CRUISE OR YOUR MONEY BACK**

EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES® - worth **£££s** off your next cruise††

CRUISE HIGHLIGHTS



Discover pristine beaches, turquoise waters, and vibrant island cultures on this extended cruise to the Caribbean Sea. Explore ancient Mayan ruins, lush rainforests and the wonders of the Panama Canal. This sailing offers you ample time to explore, relax and create memories to last a lifetime.

ON BOARD *AMBIENCE*

Your cabin isn't just a room – it's your private retreat, a place to unwind and recharge between new destinations. On board ***Ambience***, every cabin is thoughtfully designed for comfort, calm and space to breathe. With five cabin categories across seven decks, ***Ambience*** offers something for every traveller.

Enjoy the beauty of the sea right from your Ocean View cabin, offering large picture windows or portholes, bringing natural light and inspiring views. Further features include an en-suite shower room, tea & coffee facilities, fridge and a flat-screen TV. A calm, airy space ideal for longer voyages.

YOUR EXCLUSIVE FARES FROM<

Inside was ~~£5,468~~pp **NOW £2,699pp**

Ocean View was ~~£6,428~~pp **NOW £3,199pp**

Balcony was ~~£8,908~~pp **NOW £4,899pp**

HIGHER GRADES ARE SOLD OUT

Solo fares are available on request

rolcruise.co.uk/times

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

ABTA ABTA No Y6765

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON

0808 239 5184

QUOTE OFFER REF **644929**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM – 8PM

Trustpilot

Platinum Trusted Service Award feefo

Fares and availability correct at time of sign off (09/09/2026), are based on two adults sharing, except single cabins, and may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offer applies to new bookings only. Gratuities of up to £6.00 per person per night are automatically added to guests on board account. ±Savings are already incorporated within the fares. Wildlife sightings are not guaranteed. +Gift is based on one per booking for UK mainland addresses only. <Cabins may be on a guarantee basis. ++Subject to cruise line T&C's. ††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. Ambassador T&Cs apply. E&OE.

Your call answered in **3 rings**

020·7962·9933

DialAFlight

Your travel. Personally crafted

SAVE MORE WITH AIR FARES YOU **WON'T** FIND ONLINE

BEACH BREAKS

The Verandah Antigua 4*

Save 55% on all inclusive

Enjoy world-class amenities at this adults-only tropical escape

7 nights fr £1,795pp
Flights & hotel

OBLU NATURE Helengeli 4*

Save 25% AI + 2 excursions

Spend time with thriving marine life thanks to the exotic house reef

7 nights fr £1,945pp
Flights, hotel & transfers

Bahía del Duque, Tenerife 5*

Save 15%

Nestled in an extraordinary oasis of landscapes and crystal clear waters

5 nights fr £989pp
Flights & hotel

One&Only Le Saint Géran, Mauritius 5*

Save 35%
Flights & hotel - 7 nights fr £2,369pp

Mango Bay Hotel, Barbados 4*

Save 30% on all inclusive

An intimate resort in an idyllic spot on the Platinum Coast

7 nights fr £1,979pp
Flights & hotel

AMAZING THAILAND

NH Collection Samui Peace Resort 5*

Save 25%
Flights, hotel & transfers - 7 nights fr £1,245pp

Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket 5*

Save 55% + room upgrade

Set directly on the sands at Karon Beach, with its own water park

7 nights fr £1,015pp
Flights, hotel & transfers

Anantara Bophut Koh Samui 5*

Save 15%
Flights, hotel & transfers - 7 nights fr £1,435pp

Centara Grand Beach Resort Hua Hin 5*

Save 20%

This colonial-style resort is one of south east Asia's most romantic

7 nights fr £1,145pp
Flights, hotels & transfers

Dusit Thani Krabi Beach Resort 5*

Save 15%

Set on Klong Muang Beach, surrounded by exotic Krabi province

7 nights fr £1,215pp
Flights, hotel & transfers

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
Adelaide	fr £995	fr £4329
Antigua	fr £599	fr £2809
Auckland	fr £799	fr £3979
Bali	fr £669	fr £2589
Bangkok	fr £569	fr £1995
Barbados	fr £605	fr £2709
Brisbane	fr £975	fr £3969
Cape Town	fr £725	fr £2489
Costa Rica	fr £739	fr £2095
Cyprus	fr £159	fr £589
Dubai	fr £465	fr £1649
Faro	fr £109	fr £459
Greece	fr £149	fr £429
Hawaii	fr £1195	fr £3799
Hong Kong	fr £499	fr £2459
Italy	fr £119	fr £379
Jamaica	fr £729	fr £2149
Johannesburg	fr £629	fr £2089
Kuala Lumpur	fr £569	fr £2125
Las Vegas	fr £499	fr £3375
Los Angeles	fr £439	fr £3195
Maldives	fr £579	fr £2459
Mauritius	fr £719	fr £2999
Melbourne	fr £859	fr £3995
Mexico	fr £639	fr £2309
Miami	fr £499	fr £2699
Nashville	fr £709	fr £2795
New Orleans	fr £729	fr £2945
New York	fr £459	fr £2529
Orlando	fr £495	fr £2895
Perth	fr £969	fr £4279
Phuket	fr £599	fr £2019
Rio de Janeiro	fr £839	fr £2429
San Francisco	fr £475	fr £2549
Seychelles	fr £645	fr £2285
Singapore	fr £549	fr £2489
Sri Lanka	fr £589	fr £2095
St Lucia	fr £625	fr £2259
Sydney	fr £879	fr £3995
Tenerife	fr £105	fr £595
Tokyo	fr £759	fr £2539
Toronto	fr £429	fr £2295
Vancouver	fr £539	fr £3049
Vietnam	fr £595	fr £2435

CLIENT TRUST ACCOUNT · ATOL Protected · ABTA ABTA No 76705

CANADA

See the best of the west with this exciting adventure around the Canadian Rockies

Save 10%
Flights, hotels & transfers - 8 nts fr £3,859pp

AUSTRALIA

Enjoy this unforgettable 4* Sydney, Melbourne & Tasmania fly drive

Save 10%
Flights, hotels & car hire - 12 nts fr £2,495pp

DUBAI

5* Jumeirah Al Naseem boasts the city's longest private beach, surrounded by lush gardens

Save 20% on half board
Flights & hotel - 5 nts fr £2,025pp

MEXICO

5* Grand Oasis Cancun enjoys a fabulous location near one of the most beautiful beaches in the Caribbean

Save 60% AI + room upgrade
Flights, hotel & transfers - 7 nts fr £1,259pp

Lapland

Save £100

Wilderness Inari hotel rests on the shores of Lapland's largest lake giving you the chance to relax in nature or get out and explore, whether you visit in summer or winter.

Flights, hotel & transfers
7 nights fr £1,485pp

Italy

Save £200

Start in Rome and the Vatican city wander along Pompeii's frozen-in-time streets, admire Lakes Como and Maggiore, plus the art in Florence and explore the Tuscan hills.

Flights, hotels & transfers
12 nights fr £2,735pp

Turkey

Save 10%

From the legends of Troy to ancient Greek cities, this in-depth Best of Turkey voyage, visits Homeric legends, World War One battlegrounds & preserved Roman ruins.

Flights, hotels & transfers
13 nights fr £2,169pp

Vietnam

Save £200

Vietnam is one of the world's most fascinating countries, and this comprehensive tour, begins in the north at Hanoi and ends in the south at Saigon.

Flights, hotels & transfers
10 nights fr £3,099pp

USA

Save £200

Enjoy a cross country ride by rail, beginning in Chicago following the legendary path of Route 66 to Albuquerque, the Grand Canyon ending at the Pacific in LA.

Flights, hotels, train & transfers
13 nights fr £2,859pp

Safari and the beach — the best

Club Med's family resorts are a hit in Europe, and now they have come to the African bush, says Louise France

On Tuesday we were surfing in the Indian Ocean (OK, face-planting in the Indian Ocean — you should have seen the size of the waves). And on Wednesday we were eyeballing an elephant in the bush, so close up we could see the hairs on her trunk. That was two bucket-list entries ticked off in 24 hours. Job done if, like us, you were looking for that elusive holiday that would satisfy two working adults and an only child — 16 years old, fresh from GCSE hell and hard to please because he'd seen the world already, albeit on TikTok.

We were at Club Med's latest opening, its first venture into South Africa, where the clever idea is that you can have two holidays in one. Four days at a beautifully designed resort 25 miles north of Durban on KwaZulu-Natal's Dolphin Coast — named after the bottlenose dolphins that you could spot over breakfast — and a three-day adventure at a private big-five game reserve a four-hour drive away.

I am usually the family holiday monitor, used to booking camping trips in Spain and European city breaks in Airbnbs where I spend most of my time fretting about key safes and where to put the recycling. But with Club Med they did all the organising and I was liberated. The 30-minute minibus transfer from the airport dropped us at the reception of Club Med Tinley Manor, where staff were lined up and waving. We were offered a glass of champagne and invited to admire the view from the impressive light-filled reception, with its panoramic picture windows looking out across the swimming pool to the spectacular coastline beyond.

Set on a former sugarcane plantation, the 345 rooms and 66 suites all overlook the beach. The resort, which opened in July, includes three swimming pools, five bars, two restaurants, a gym, a hammam, a spa, a special annexe just for teens and the brand's first surf school. It was running at 80 per cent capacity — we visited during South Africa's winter season — and the expansive layout meant it never felt overcrowded, even at the buffet at peak dinner time. Our interconnecting superior family rooms were luxurious without being blingy, with tastefully designed African-inspired touches such as beaded chair backs, wicker lampshades and carved wooden side lights.

Club Med was having a moment, inspired by a recently released Amazon Prime documentary series about it, called *Dream Makers*. Even staff members said there was a uniquely devoted culture around the brand: many have worked for it for years, married other staff members and had kids who ended up working there too.

Club Med began in 1950 when two pioneering, left-leaning men — one French, the other Belgian — rented a campsite in Mallorca. They erected some ex-army tents, asked guests to pay upfront and gave them coloured beads to use as spending money instead of cash. There was a utopian vibe. Staff were called *gentils organisateurs* (kind organisers) — they are still being called GOs nearly 80 years later — and encouraged to mix with the clientele. (There was also a tradition that guests were addressed as *tu* rather than the more formal *vous*.) The brand was the first to launch kids' clubs, its Mini Clubs and Teen Clubs catering to children aged from six months to 17 years old. *Et voilà*: the all-inclusive, child-centred holiday was born.

We downloaded the Club Med App, which included each day's potential itinerary, and spent the next three days surfing badly, playing padel badly and laughing a lot. There was so much to choose from, including tennis lessons, circus skills, archery, paddleboarding, kayaking, fitness classes and mountain biking. I booked in for an early morning yoga session on an idyllic wooden platform overlooking the sea. When I came back and found out that our son had already been up for two hours photographing the sunrise, I knew something had clicked. (Yes, it was probably for his Instagram feed but, hey, give the boy a break.)

We were all won over by the buffet (even if I did put on three pounds in three days), which included South African cuisine and masses of European options, meaning everyone got to discuss their weird choices and fussy eaters got a free pass: "So, Mum, tonight I've gone for the kudu curry, pizza and rotisserie chicken, followed by lemon sorbet."

The resort offers day trips at an extra cost, including a boat tour to watch dolphins and whales. Because the weather forecast looked dodgy, we instead booked a day trip to Isithumba, a Zulu village. I feared this would be excruciating, like a school trip, but it was excellently organised by the tourist guide from the village. We met the local healer, sat in the chief's hut and learnt about Zulu culture. We were all fascinated. Even I put my phone away.

On Wednesday morning we were driven four hours north to Vikela Safari Lodge, with access to 19,000 hectares of northern KwaZulu-Natal. After lunch, looking out across the washed-out green bush and the mauve hillsides in the distance, we headed off on our first game drive. We made a rookie error by turning up in shorts — it got chilly once the sun went down — but there were plenty of blankets in the back of the Toyota Land Cruiser. Our guide, Mark Mdlovu, let our son sit in the front and handed him the binoculars. Within minutes we saw skittish impalas, imperious kudus and super-shy warthogs. Hidden in the trees, Mdlovu pointed out zebras, white rhinos and our first giraffe (of many). His skill was incredible. I asked him how he did it and he shrugged, told me it was instinctive and that he had been brought up in the bush looking for animals. We turned a corner and came face to face with an elephant. Mdlovu cut the engine and it was us and the elephant, so close we could hear her chewing.

The following morning we were up at 5.30am (with zero complaining from the teenager — what was going on?) and back out in the 4x4, fortified by hot chocolate and croissants. There was extra jeopardy because there was a thunderstorm, the whites of zebra stripes glinting in the lightning. We saw more giraffes and elephants, hippos and crocodiles. This time the highlight was two lionesses sitting beside a dried-out riverbed feasting on an impala kill. We asked Mdlovu — fast becoming a legend in our family — if he had ever been in danger and he told us about the time he had been thrown into the air by the horn of a rhino.

Club Med Tinley Manor

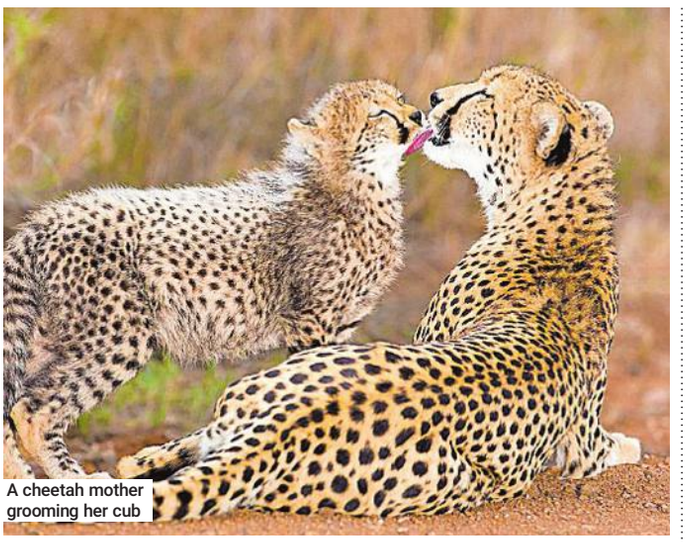
A family tent at Vikela

Vikela Safari Lodge

# of both worlds in South Africa

The Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal

Tinley Manor beach



A cheetah mother grooming her cub

The accommodation at Vikela was in one of 75 luxury canvas huts, perfectly designed for a family, with a kingsize bed looking out to the bush through floor-to-ceiling windows and, behind, two alcoves for single beds with curtains for privacy. The main lodge included a restaurant and bar, with outside space where you could sit around traditional campfires and compare safari adventures. The reserve employs 500 staff, many of them women from four local villages. The manager told me how one salary could sustain up to ten people in a household. In the evening our 16-year-old was late for dinner. It turned out he had been photographing the Milky Way.

In total we got six game drives at dawn and dusk, each one lasting for three hours. In the kids' club, children as young as four can get their own specially designed, shorter drives. On the final day I thought I might skip the pre-dawn start in favour of a lie-in before the six-hour transfer to Johannesburg airport, but the teenager (already planning his next trip to South Africa) was awake and raring to go.

This game drive turned out to be the highlight of the entire week. The outside world faded away when we watched a cheetah, an endangered species, walk slowly towards our vehicle and lie down on the track, sprawling in the dust, her belly full from a recent kill. One of her cubs joined her and we watched in silent awe as they licked one another clean.

Safaris, I decided, were exhilarating and heart-thumping but full of stillness too. There was a sense that as the week went on we got younger and younger: we remembered episodes of the naturalist Steve Backshall's *Deadly 60*, which we used to watch when our son was eight, and compared the animals to Richard Scarry's picture books, which we loved when he was four. This was a holiday where the world got bigger and we all got smaller — kids and world-weary grown-ups — and that's where the magic happened.

Need to know

Louise France was a guest of Club Med, which has seven nights' all-inclusive — five at Club Med Tinley Manor and two at Vikela Safari Lodge — from £1,715pp. Fly to Durban and out of Johannesburg

Multi-stop holidays in South Africa

Cape Town and the Winelands
There are plenty of activities packed into this seven-night self-guided trip with Kuoni, based in hotels in Cape Town and Franschhoek. You'll tour rolling vineyards on a hop-on, hop-off wine tram and take a helicopter ride over Cape Town, with options to join a cycling wine-tasting experience, visit Robben Island and explore the city by sidecar.
Details Seven nights' B&B — four in Cape Town, three in Franschhoek — from £2,475pp, including flights, transport and activities (kuoni.co.uk)

Following in the footsteps of Nelson Mandela
Visit the places where Nelson Mandela once lived and worked on this private tour with Red Savannah. You'll spend three nights in Cape Town exploring Robben Island, City Hall and Tokai with a guide before flying to Johannesburg for three nights at Sanctuary Mandela, a boutique hotel that was once part of the former president's home. You'll visit the Constitutional Court and explore Soweto, the township where Mandela's earlier home has been turned into a museum.
Details Six nights' B&B — three in Cape Town, three in Johannesburg — from £4,525pp, including transfers and activities (redsavannah.com). Fly to Cape Town and from Johannesburg

Family trip along the Garden Route
The kids won't get bored on this 16-night self-drive journey along the Garden Route designed for families by Rickshaw Travel. Travelling from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth and staying in guesthouses and lodges, you'll try a Cape Malay cooking class, go mountain biking in the vineyards, canoe along the Touws river, hike in the Featherbed Nature Reserve (*below*) and spot wildlife in Addo Elephant National Park.
Details 16 nights' B&B — four in Cape Town, two in Stellenbosch, two in Wilderness, two in Knysna, two in Addo Elephant National Park, two in Eastern Cape, two in Port Elizabeth — from £2,047pp, including transfers, car hire, activities and some extra meals (rickshawtravel.co.uk). Fly to Cape Town and from Port Elizabeth
Siobhan Grogan

FARES WILL INCREASE 8PM 14TH SEPTEMBER 2026

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

LAST 3 DAYS TO BOOK

LUXURY NO-FLY SALE EVENT

FROM ONLY £599PP

THE TOP PARTNER FOR CUNARD

ALL BOOKINGS SAVE 10%± ENDS 8PM 14TH SEPTEMBER 2026

COMPLIMENTARY ON BOARD SPEND OF UP TO $1,160*

OR

COMPLIMENTARY CAR PARKING OR COACH TRANSFERS++

UPGRADE TO ALL-INCLUSIVE FOR INCLUDED DRINKS, WI-FI & SPECIALITY DINING++

CANARY ISLANDS & CAPE VERDE *LAST STATEROOMS REMAINING*

21nts 21/02/27 — Queen Mary 2

Depart Southampton - Ferrol, Spain - Funchal, Madeira (overnight) - Dakar, Senegal - Mindelo, Cape Verde (overnight) - Santa Cruz, Tenerife - Arrecife, Lanzarote - Lisbon, Portugal - Arrive in Southampton

	INSIDE	OCEAN VIEW	BALCONY†	CLUB BALCONY	PRINCESS GRILL	MASTER SUITE
Full Board Fare (pp)	£2,239	£2,649	£3,169	SOLD	SOLD	£19,849
All-Inc Fare from (pp)	£3,289	£3,699	£4,219	SOLD	SOLD	£20,899

Solo fares are available from **£4,399**

SPAIN & FRANCE DISCOVERY *Similar itinerary departing 28th March 2027, please call for details*

7nts 21/02/27 — Queen Elizabeth

Depart Southampton - La Coruña (tours to Santiago de Compostela×), Spain - Gijón, Spain - Getxo (tours to Bilbao×), Spain - Le Havre, France - Arrive in Southampton

	INSIDE	OCEAN VIEW†	BALCONY	CLUB BALCONY (1 LEFT)	PRINCESS GRILL	PENTHOUSE SUITE
Full Board Fare (pp)	£599	£669	£799	£1,319	£1,929	£2,399
All-Inc Fare from (pp)	£1,029	£1,049	£1,219	£1,739	£2,349	£2,839

Solo fares are available from **£1,349**

MOROCCAN, SPANISH & ITALIAN DELIGHTS

16nts 12/03/27 — Queen Elizabeth

Depart Southampton - Tangier, Morocco - Tarragona, Spain - Palma, Mallorca, - Palermo, Sicily - La Goulette (tours to Carthage or Tunis×), Tunisia - Cagliari, Sardinia - Málaga (tours to Granada×), Spain - Cádiz (tours to Seville×), Spain - Arrive in Southampton

	INSIDE	OCEAN VIEW†	BALCONY (1 LEFT)	CLUB BALCONY (1 LEFT)	PRINCESS GRILL	QUEENS GRILL
Full Board Fare (pp)	£1,749	£1,799	£2,699	£4,949	SOLD	SOLD
All-Inc Fare from (pp)	£2,549	£2,599	£3,499	£5,749	SOLD	SOLD

Solo fares are available from **£3,499**

MEDITERRANEAN & GREEK ISLES

19nts 05/09/27 — Queen Victoria

Depart Southampton - Lisbon, Portugal - Cagliari, Sardinia - Katakolon (tours to Olympia×), Greece - Corfu, Greece - Dubrovnik, Croatia - Split, Croatia - Valletta, Malta - Cádiz (tours to Seville×), Spain - Arrive in Southampton

	INSIDE	OCEAN VIEW†	BALCONY	CLUB BALCONY	PRINCESS GRILL	GRAND SUITE
Full Board Fare (pp)	£2,879	£2,969	£4,179	SOLD	SOLD	£23,399
All-Inc Fare from (pp)	£3,829	£3,899	£5,129	SOLD	SOLD	£24,349

Solo fares are available from **£5,679**

AZORES, PORTUGAL & SPAIN *FROM ONLY £89PP PER NIGHT*

12nts 31/10/27 — Queen Anne

Depart Southampton - Praia da Vitória, Azores - Ponta Delgada, Azores - Funchal, Madeira - Lisbon, Portugal - Vigo (tours to Santiago de Compostela×), Spain - Arrive in Southampton

	INSIDE	OCEAN VIEW	BALCONY	CLUB BALCONY	PRINCESS GRILL	QUEENS GRILL
Full Board Fare (pp)	£1,069	£1,299	£1,789	£2,099	£3,419	£4,399
All-Inc Fare from (pp)	£1,789	£2,029	£2,499	£2,819	£4,139	£5,119

Solo fares are available from **£2,129**

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR IN THE CANARIES

14nts 21/12/27 — Queen Anne

Depart Southampton - Lisbon, Portugal ★CHRISTMAS EVE★ - ★Spending Christmas Day relaxing at sea★ - Arrecife, Lanzarote - Las Palmas, Gran Canaria - Santa Cruz, Tenerife - Puerto del Rosario, Fuerteventura - Funchal, Madeira (overnight) ★NEW YEAR'S EVE★ - Arrive in Southampton

	INSIDE	OCEAN VIEW	BALCONY†	CLUB BALCONY	PRINCESS GRILL	QUEENS GRILL
Full Board Fare (pp)	£2,479	£3,369	£3,519	£5,039	£6,749	£9,089
All-Inc Fare from (pp)	£3,319	£4,199	£4,359	£5,879	£7,589	£9,929

Solo fares are available from **£4,959**

GRAND CARIBBEAN WINTER ESCAPE *FROM ONLY £97PP PER NIGHT*

35nts 11/01/28 — Queen Mary 2

Depart Southampton - Santa Cruz, Tenerife - Philipsburg, St. Maarten - St. George's, Grenada - Castries, St. Lucia - Bridgetown, Barbados (overnight) - Roseau, Dominica - Kralendijk, Bonaire - Willemstad, Curaçao - Basseterre, St. Kitts - Road Town, Tortola - Funchal, Madeira - Arrive in Southampton

	INSIDE	OCEAN VIEW	BALCONY†	CLUB BALCONY	PRINCESS GRILL	QUEENS GRILL
Full Board Fare (pp)	£3,399	£4,699	£4,829	£8,099	£11,069	£14,399
All-Inc Fare from (pp)	£5,159	£6,449	£6,579	£9,849	£12,819	£16,149

Solo fares are available from **£6,829**

rolcruise.co.uk/times

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE — ABTA ABTA No F9255

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON **0808 239 6595**

QUOTE OFFER REF **644928**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM - 8PM

Trustpilot

Platinum Trusted Service Award 2026 feefo

Pricing and availability correct at time of sign off (10/09/2026). Fares are based on two adults sharing, may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offers apply to new bookings only. ±Savings already applied to advertised fares. *On board spend is per stateroom and is tiered depending on voyage/grade booked. †Denotes an obstructed view. ×Tours are subject to a cost. ††Cruise line T&Cs apply. Cunard T&Cs apply. E&OE

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Sri Lanka
WITH UGA RESORTS

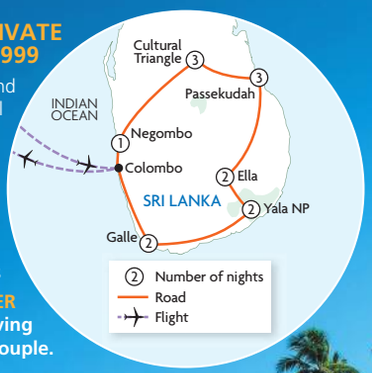
Journey through the enchanting scenery of Sri Lanka, staying in a variety of the highly renowned Uga properties. From countryside manor houses and luxury cabins located in the jungle, to an immaculate coastal hideaway, see the best of the country in absolute comfort.

TRAILFINDERS can tailormake your holiday to suit your needs. Call us today to kickstart your trip-of-a-lifetime…

13 NIGHT PRIVATE TOUR FROM £3,999

Direct flights and 14 day private tour incl 13 nights 4★ to 5★ hotels, private vehicle & guide, activities/excursions, selected alcoholic drinks in Yala & 18 meals

SPECIAL OFFER
Tour discount – **saving over £550 per couple.**



Featured properties you'll stay in...

UGA RIVA, NEGOMBO

This charming, heritage property is a 180 year old manor house which has been lovingly restored with a modern flair. Positioned within a private coconut palm estate, it is conveniently located within a short drive of Colombo airport, and offers an ideal setting in which to relax, with expansive gardens and a lovely pool. With only 7 rooms including a private living room in each, this boutique property is the perfect welcome to Sri Lanka.

UGA ULAGALLA, CULTURAL TRIANGLE

A truly exceptional and tranquil retreat nestled amidst Sri Lanka's countryside and paddy fields, Uga Ulagalla will stay with you forever. A legacy to Sri Lanka's past cultural traditions, the boutique property perfectly balances restoration with activities. Relax in your own pool villa and indulge in a multitude of activities, from horse riding to cooking classes.

THE BAY AN UGA EXPERIENCE, PASSEKUDAH

Fusing Sri Lankan and Mediterranean architecture with modern interiors, this contemporary resort occupies a prime position on the glorious white sands of Passekudah Bay on the east coast. The impressive pool is beautifully set in expansive palm-dotted gardens and snorkelling trips on the nearby reef are easily arranged. With friendly service and calm waters, The Bay is perfect for a relaxing beach holiday.

UGA CHENA HUTS, YALA NATIONAL PARK

Set amongst sand dunes and tropical jungle at the ocean's edge, this distinctive property boasts 18 luxurious cabins with private plunge pools and truly has the wow factor. Embark on exciting game drives led by expert rangers and keep an eye out for the elusive leopard. Afterwards, opt for a refreshing dip in the pool, enjoy delectable cuisine, and treat yourself to a nightcap at the bar.

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

Call ***TRAILFINDERS*** on **020 7938 0207** or visit your local Travel Centre

Prices are per person based on a twin/double share & valid for selected November departures. Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel. Offers are subject to availability & restrictions may apply. Prices correct at time of going to print 10 Sep 26.

ATOL LICENCE: 1458 caa.co.uk

Trustpilot ★★★★★

No.1 TOUR OPERATOR

TINSELTOWN TO BORA BORA

Bike to hidden bays in the South Pacific, drive the rim of a volcano in Hawaii – then unwind on a private veranda

Catching your first glimpse of Bora Bora is a moment to savour – the jagged, jungle-covered Mount Otemanu rising from a serene turquoise lagoon in the French Polynesian volcanic island group.

This paradise in the South Pacific is just one of the places you can explore on board Oceania Vista's 18-night voyage from Los Angeles to Tahiti.

With a two-night stop in Bora Bora, there's plenty of time to relax on the white sand beaches or discover marine wildlife in the crystal clear shallows. Snorkel over colourful reefs or take a glass-bottom boat ride to see gliding, graceful rays and blacktip sharks.

On the neighbouring island of Huahine, you can go off the beaten track with a four-wheel-drive adventure to far-flung villages and fruit plantations. For a slice of slow travel, hidden bays can be reached on hired bikes.

Hawaii is a haven for wildlife enthusiasts. From December to April a stop in Maui's Kahului offers a chance to spot the world's largest gathering of North Pacific humpback whales during their migration. Meanwhile, on Hawai'i itself – often referred to simply as the Big Island – a stop at Hilo is the starting point to explore the eastern volcanic area. Drive the 11-mile rim of Kilauea volcano and marvel at the dramatic lava formations of the Unesco-listed Volcanoes National Park. An hour north, the thundering Akaka Falls reach a dizzying 135m – double that of Niagara.

Oasis of palm
Bora Bora; a rather well-known sign in LA

On-shore experiences are a big part of any Oceania Cruise, and its ships spend 30-50 per cent more time in port than other liners, allowing guests an authentic insight into each destination.

Back on board, the adults-only Oceania Vista sets new standards for comfort and luxury with no more than 607 rooms and suites – all featuring a veranda. A ratio of two staff members to every three guests further enhances the personalised and attentive service.

As with all Oceania Cruises, food and drink are a highlight of the journey. Known for its fine cuisine, on Oceania Vista there's an array of complimentary speciality restaurants providing unique dining. They range from a pan-Asian menu at Red Ginger to sophisticated French dishes by certified master chef Jacques Pépin at Jacques.

An innovative mixology programme lets guests discover the latest cocktail trends, low and no-sugar wines, and zero-proof concoctions thanks to mixology lessons, curated drinks menus and speciality beverage carts.

Beyond the ship, a bounty of local food and drink experiences can be enjoyed throughout the trip. That could be a traditional Polynesian lunch of fresh seafood and root vegetables on a private *motu* islet in Bora Bora, a tour of the vanilla pod farms of Huahine or a visit to the volcanic wineries of Hilo. The Oceania Vista serves up these sumptuous tastes of Pacific life in style.

OCEANIA CRUISES®

TRAILFINDERS THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

Not only can Trailfinders book your Oceania Cruise, it can assist with the entire holiday, including flights, additional pre/post night accommodation, tours and transfers. The team is on hand 365/24/7 until you're safely home and your money is completely secure in a trust account. Call on 020 7938 0209 and speak to an expert consultant to book an Oceania cruise for your next getaway

TRAILFINDERS THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

OCEANIA CRUISES® YOUR WORLD. YOUR WAY.®

Tinsel Town to Bora Bora

Explore Los Angeles' glitzy neighbourhoods and sweeping beaches before embarking on a trans-Pacific voyage aboard the Oceania Vista™ to lush Hawaii and the paradise islands of French Polynesia.

Days 1-2 **Los Angeles, USA**
Fly to Los Angeles, the City of Angels. Wander this iconic city's sites from Rodeo Drive to the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Day 3 **Board Oceania Vista™**

Days 4-8 **Relaxing At Sea**
Take advantage of the plethora of activities aboard Oceania Vista™ whilst enjoying The Finest Cuisine at Sea® at 11 dining venues.

Day 9 **Hilo (Hawaii)**

Day 10 **Kahului**

Day 11 **Honolulu**

Days 17-18 **Bora Bora**

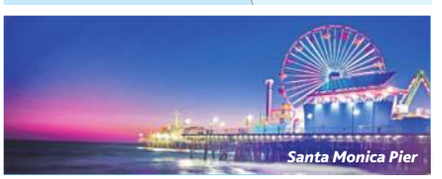
Day 19 **Huahine**

Days 20-21 **Bora Bora**
Disembark in Tahiti and fly to Bora Bora. Upon arrival transfer to your hotel.

Day 22 **Tahiti**
Fly to Tahiti and transfer to your hotel.

Days 23-24 **Fly home**

Days not listed are spent relaxing at sea



OCEANIA CRUISES®
- Boutique, luxury cruise line
- Known for having the finest cuisine at sea
- Country club style atmosphere with designer interiors

Your exclusive **TRAILFINDERS** *holiday includes*

Saving over £2,000 per couple

- *Flights*
- *2 nights 4★ Los Angeles hotel*
- *17 night cruise aboard Oceania Vista™ incl:*
  - *Full board*
  - *Choose between wine & beer with lunch & dinner or $300 per person shore excursion credit*
  - *No supplements for any speciality restaurant*
  - *Gratuities*
- *2 nights 4★ Bora Bora hotel incl breakfast*
- *1 night 4★ Tahiti hotel*
- *Selected private transfers*

24 day holiday from

INSIDE STATEROOM	PENTHOUSE SUITE
£8,399pp	**£10,549pp**

Priced for 9 Nov 27 departure. Ask us about alternative departures.

LUXURY SMALL SHIP

Oceania Vista™
Guest Capacity: 1,200
Crew Capacity: 800

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

TF TRUST · ATOL LICENCE: 1458 caa.co.uk · IATA · CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED

Call **TRAILFINDERS** Cruise Team on **020 7938 0209** or visit your local Travel Centre

Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel.
Offers are subject to availability & restrictions may apply. Prices correct at time of going to print on 10 Sep 26.

Which? Awards 2026 · Trustpilot ★★★★★ No.1 CRUISE AGENCY

CARIBBEAN ADVENTURES
ON SMALLER SHIPS

USE CODE
TIMES10
TO SAVE A FURTHER
10% OFF ALL
CARIBBEAN
SAILINGS*

TWO WAYS TO ENJOY A HASSLE-FREE CARIBBEAN HOLIDAY

FLY TO/FROM THE UK

DIRECT FLIGHT
Fly direct from UK (Heathrow or Manchester)
Flights with Virgin Atlantic included
Luggage straight from airport to cabin

SMALLER SHIP
Fewer crowds, fewer queues, less waiting
More space, more comfort
Closer ports, more time ashore

BIGGER ADVENTURE
Hassle-free 14-night cruises
Visit 10+ islands
Choose from 10 incredible winter 26/27 cruises

From **£1,599** per person

SAIL TO/FROM THE UK

NO FLYING
Sail straight from the UK
No airports, no hassle, no long-haul flights
Your holiday starts at the port

SMALLER SHIP
Fewer crowds, fewer queues, less waiting
More space, more comfort
Closer ports, more time ashore

LONGER ADVENTURE
Two relaxing cruises up to 45 nights in Jan 2027
Epic transatlantic and Caribbean highlights
Unpack once, more exploring

From **£2,999** per person

Book your Caribbean cruise today **www.ambassadorcruiseline.com** Call **0333 060 8345**

Sign up to our database **ambassadorcruiseline.com/thetimes** for the chance **to win a 14-night fly Caribbean sailing****

AMBASSADOR™ CRUISE LINE

ABTA ABTA No. Y6765

ATOL 12713 PROTECTED

virgin atlantic

BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 WINNER

BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 WINNER

BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 WINNER

Platinum Trusted Service Award 2026 feefo

* The TIMES10 promotional code cannot be combined with other charity/member/association/media or affiliate promotion codes or onboard future cruise offers. It may only be combined with an Ambassador Campaign Promotional code advertised on the Ambassador website and is eligible to be used with Nectar. The promotional code can only be used for new bookings only made directly on Ambassador's website or through our call centre, it cannot be used for bookings made through travel agents or other third parties. Promotional code is valid on all new bookings from 12th September 2026 until 31st October 2026 closing at 23:59 on 2026/27/28/29 Fly-Caribbean Renaissance and A12701 & A22701 No-Fly Caribbean sailings only. The promotional code may be discontinued at any time at Ambassador's discretion. Fares subject to availability based on two people sharing an twin inside cabin and may be withdrawn or changed without notice.

** The prize comprises one Ocean View Cabin for two adults on any available 26/27 or 27/28 season Ambassador Fly-Caribbean sailing of up to 14 nights of the winner's choice, departing on or before 5th March 2028. Subject to availability and blackout dates as shown in full terms and conditions. The prize is based on a Saver Fare and includes economy flights. Other cabin grades, including suites, flight upgrades, drinks packages, gratuities, service charges and any other chargeable add-ons are excluded. Cruise holidays booked with Ambassador Cruise Holidays Limited, trading as Ambassador Cruise Line, are financially protected in accordance with the Package Travel and Linked Arrangements Regulations 2018. Copyright 2026. Ambassador Cruise Holidays Limited is a company registered in England and Wales. Registered number: 13299365. For full T&C's please see ambassadorcruiseline.com/thetimes

Reader's competition

Win a swish Devon stay

Vote in our annual Travel Awards for your chance to win one of five prizes

Colleton Hall

Grade II listed Colleton Hall is a pearl of the Devon countryside, with 38 acres of private woodland and parkland to roam and, new for this year, a lakeside swimming pontoon and the luxurious Colleton Bar. The centrepiece is the main house: an immaculately restored Georgian pile with six en suite bedrooms, a grand entrance hall and a Regency dining room that's perfect for living out your Pemberley fantasies.

You could happily stay put here, but you're well placed for discovering some of England's finest beaches and national parks, with Dartmoor to the south, Exmoor to the north and the wildly pretty beaches of north Devon a short drive away. Your prize, courtesy of Oliver's Travels, is a three-night stay for up to 12 people, plus a luxury hamper and a 90-minute tour and wine tasting at the nearby Quoit at Cross Vineyard, subject to availability. Travel to and from the property is at your own expense, as is all food, drink and other expenses not included in the prize; up to two dogs are welcome but must be requested at the time of booking, with a £30 charge per pet.

The drawing room

The prize is valid for stays between November 1, 2026, and December 15, 2027. Blackout dates apply, including school holidays, UK bank holidays, December 14 to January 4 and Easter. You'll need to give a minimum of six weeks' notice.

For more information about Colleton Hall and Oliver's Travels, visit oliverstravels.com.

How to enter

For your chance to win, visit **thetimes.com/travelawards** and tell us the airlines, operators and destinations that have impressed you over the past 12 months. Vote in all catagories to be entered into the draw. Prizes are for two people and, for trips outside the UK, include travel unless stated. For details, terms and conditions, see the above page online.

Oliver's Travels

You could also win...

- A ten-night full-board expedition cruise to Greenland with HX Expeditions
- A seven-night all-inclusive holiday to Sandals Ochi in Jamaica with Sandals Resorts
- A five-night all-inclusive stay at the Ixian Grand & All Suites in Rhodes with easyJet holidays
- A seven-night full-board European river cruise with AmaWaterways

THE TRAVEL AWARDS 2026
THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE TRAVEL AWARDS 2026
THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

Win a dream holiday with us

Tell us about your holiday heroes, from airlines and cruises to tours and hotels, and you could win one of five fantastic prizes to Europe, Greenland, Jamaica and more.

Vote now at **thetimes.com/travelawards**

Proudly sponsored by:

DESTINATIONS
THE HOLIDAY & TRAVEL SHOW

UK residents 18+ only. Ends 23.59 BST October 18, 2026.
See thetimes.com/traveltermsandconditions for full prize descriptions, privacy policy & T&Cs. Promoter: Times Media Ltd.

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

singapore
Passion Made Possible

Singapore & Bali

Day 1 Fly to Singapore

Days 2-5 Singapore
Singapore dazzles with futuristic skylines, rich culture, and incredible food. Begin with the breathtaking light show at Gardens by the Bay before feasting at a buzzing hawker centre. A city tour takes you through iconic Merlion Park and the stunning National Orchid Garden, culminating in afternoon tea at the legendary Raffles Hotel. From there, escape to Sentosa Island for lush tropical nature or sun-soaked beaches. Back in the city, explore the boutiques and world-class restaurants of charming Dempsey Hill, or give in to the irresistible pull of Orchard Road – one of Asia's most celebrated shopping streets.

Days 6-10 Ubud
Fly to Denpasar in Bali and transfer to Ubud where emerald rice terraces, ancient temples and healing spas await. Discover the artisan markets, jungle retreats and spiritual serenity. The nourishing spirit of Ubud invites deep relaxation and cultural wonder.

Days 11-15 Bali's Beaches
Recharge your mind and soul in Nusa Dua for a final five nights of pure tropical beauty and barefoot bliss where crystal clear waters, tranquil spa days and exceptional dining await.

Days 16-17 Fly home

17 days from **£2,499**

Flights, 4 nights 4★+ Singapore hotel, Night Safari, Singapore City Tour, 5 nights 4★+ Ubud hotel, 5 nights 5★ Bali beach resort, breakfast and private transfers

SPECIAL OFFER *15% room discount and 1 FREE night* ***– saving over £350 per couple***

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

TF TRUST · CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED · Which? Travel Awards 2026 Brand of the Year

Call ***TRAILFINDERS*** on **020 7938 0207** or visit your local Travel Centre

Prices are per person based on a twin/double share & valid for selected January departures. Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel. Offers are subject to availability & restrictions may apply. Prices correct at time of going to print on 10 Sep 26.

ATOL LICENCE: 1458 caa.co.uk

IATA · Trustpilot ★★★★★ No.1 TOUR OPERATOR

THE TOP PARTNER FOR HURTIGRUTEN

EXCLUSIVE FARES ONLY AVAILABLE WITH ROL CRUISE

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE 2026/27 BESTSELLING NORTHERN LIGHTS EXCLUSIVE SALE

EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF UP TO 45%±

FREE VOYAGE IF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS DON'T OCCUR**

DIRECT FLIGHTS FROM LONDON

EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION ENDS 8PM 18TH SEPTEMBER 2026

YOUR 11 NIGHT VOYAGE

Day 1	Fly direct from **London** to **Bergen, Norway** Upon arrival, embark your ***Coastal Ship*** for your 11-night voyage
Day 2	**Florø – Molde, Norway**
Day 3	**Kristiansund – Rørvik, Norway**
Day 4	**Brønnøysund – Svolvær, Norway** ★Cross the Arctic Circle★
Day 5	**Stokmarknes – Skjervøy, Norway**
Day 6	**Øksfjord – Berlevåg, Norway**
Day 7	**Båtsfjord – Berlevåg, Norway**
Day 8	**Mehamn – Tromsø, Norway**
Day 9	**Tromsø – Stamsund, Norway**
Day 10	**Bodø – Rørvik, Norway**
Day 11	**Trondheim – Ålesund, Norway**
Day 12	**Ålesund – Bergen, Norway** Disembark and transfer to the airport for your return direct flight to London

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ **11 NIGHTS** full board voyage on board a ***Hurtigruten Coastal Ship*** including:
  - Full board (breakfast, lunch and dinner) from Norway's Coastal Kitchen
  - No gratuities expected
  - Discover Norway's entire coastal route with 34 ports of call, sailing past more than 100 fjords & 1,000 mountains
  - English-speaking Expedition Team on board
  - On board lectures and presentations
- ✓ Explore the Arctic with a range of optional seasonal shore excursions×
- ✓ **Direct flights from London** (regional and premium class flights may be available on request>), and all overseas transfers
- ✓ **PLUS**, book a Polar Outside by 8pm 18th September2026 and receive an **EXCLUSIVE FREE** £20 John Lewis Gift Voucher+

EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES® worth **£££s**, only with ROL Cruise††

EXCLUSIVE ROL CRUISE SALE FARES FROM

CABIN FARE (PP)	2ND NOV 26	2ND DEC 26	24TH JAN 27	3RD FEB 27
Polar Inside	£1,899	**£1,749**	£2,099	£2,249
Polar Outside	£2,449	**£2,249**	£2,649	£2,849
Arctic Superior	£2,799	**£2,599**	£3,099	£3,299

SOLO FARES are available from **£2,499**

No locally payable taxes/fees apply

THE BEST WAY TO SEE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

11 NIGHTS DEPARTING 2ND NOVEMBER & 2ND DECEMBER 2026 AND 24TH JANUARY & 3RD FEBRUARY 2027

Other dates available - please call for details

The best time to see the Northern Lights? NOW!

The upcoming aurora-chasing season, between September and March of 2026-27, is expected to benefit from elevated activity, even as the solar cycle progresses steadily towards the next minimum around 2031

The Auroral Oval

Hurtigruten ships sail directly beneath the Auroral Oval, an area of consistently active displays

Multiple sightings

Travelling to different parts of the Norwegian coast on the ship increases your chances of seeing the aurora multiple times

Aurora announcements

The ship's bridge officers are always scanning the skies and horizon, and will let you know as soon as the lights appear

Mobile observatory

The advantage of being at sea is that you can quickly sail clear of cloud cover that might be blocking your view

A free voyage**

If you sail with Hurtigruten during the Northern Lights season for 11 days or more and don't see the aurora appear at least once, they promise you a free voyage to try again

rolcruise.co.uk/times

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE ABTA

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON

0808 239 5365

QUOTE OFFER REF **644932**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM - 8PM

Trustpilot

Platinum Trusted Service Award 2026 feefo

Pricing and availability correct at time of sign off 09/09/2026. Fares are per person based on two adults sharing, except single cabins, may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Offer applies to new bookings only. ±Savings are based on two adults sharing an Arctic Superior on 2nd November 2026. ×Activities are optional and must be booked in advance, pre-bookable excursions are at a supplement and must be booked at least 28 days prior to departure. Please note cabins can be based on fixed double or twin bed configuration. +Gift is based on one per booking for UK mainland addresses. >Will incur supplementary costs and may require an additional overnight stay. Flight schedules are subject to change and may involve indirect routes. Final timings will be confirmed closer to departure and could affect your holiday duration. An extra hotel night may be required. Northern lights and wildlife sightings not guaranteed. **Northern Lights promise T&C's apply, for full details visit www.rolcruise.co.uk/NLPromise. ††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. For full T&Cs visit rolcruise.co.uk. E&OE.

The best British vineyards where you can help with the harvest

Earn your glass of wine by gathering grapes. By Tomé Morrissy-Swan and Siobhan Grogan

We're fast becoming a green-fingered nation. Research says more than half of UK adults garden regularly and like nothing better than spending weekends getting their hands dirty. There's no need to stop at digging up carrots though. British wine has boomed in the past decade, and there are more than 1,000 vineyards across the country. Volunteering in the harvest is a longstanding tradition in Europe, but we needn't travel to France — many British vineyards offer the chance to join in picking fruit, often putting on hearty lunches in return and giving helpers a bottle to take home.

Harvests take place in late September and October, and vineyards will often advertise dates at short notice on their Instagram pages. Generally volunteers are asked to help out for a half or full day, but some vineyards advertise for seasonal paid helpers to work for up to a month. If that sounds too much like hard work, book one of the fun harvest events hosted by vineyards to celebrate the season, including special wine-paired dinners and behind-the-scenes tours. We've (ahem) picked lovely places to stay near each so you can make a weekend of it.

Forty Hall, Enfield, London

A working organic farm with animals, a market garden and an orchard, Forty Hall is home to the capital's only commercial-scale vineyard, producing impressive bottles, including sparkling and still whites. More than 100 regular volunteers tend the vines throughout the year and the harvest involves early starts, with picking usually done by lunchtime. Breads and pastries baked on site fuel the hungry harvesters (usually throughout September; fortyhallvineyard.com). Volunteers can book a harvest workshop to learn more about the winemaking process and help to press the grapes (£150; capel.ac.uk). If you're after more nature, spend the afternoon in nearby Epping Forest, its 6,000 acres of woodland making it the capital's most impressive green space. Stay at West Lodge Park, a country house hotel in the Beale Arboretum, 15 minutes' drive from the vineyard.
Details B&B doubles from £170 (westlodgepark.co.uk)

Flint Vineyard, Bungay, Suffolk

Bungay, on the Suffolk-Norfolk border, is a food-lover's paradise. It is home to Fen Farm Dairy, which produces some of the country's finest cheeses, including Baron Bigod — a visit to its cheese-vending machine is well worth a trip in its own right. Just down the road is Flint Vineyard, set in one of the driest, sunniest spots in the UK, which helps grapes to ripen fully to produce unique and delicious charmat-method sparkling, red, white and rosé wines. The harvest is mainly open to Flint's Wine Club members but membership offers many other benefits, including exclusive access to small-batch wines (a year's membership from £50; flintvineyard.com). Some paid pickers are required to help between September and November. Rest your vine-weary limbs at Roe, a two-bedroom self-catered converted barn with a log-burner and a large patio.
Details Three nights' self-catering for four from £825 (huskthorington.co.uk)

Ryedale Vineyards, Westow, North Yorkshire

It's widely accepted that good English wine is made in the south, but Ryedale in North Yorkshire proves that excellent vino can be created up north too. Harvests here are a big community event, with up to 20 volunteers a day picking 18 types of grapes, including chardonnay, pinot noir, pinot meunier and bacchus. Such a large variety, which all ripen at different times, makes it a lengthy process, and there are usually three picking days a week between mid-September and the end of October. Volunteers get hot and cold drinks, lunch and a bottle to take home. Nearby York and the North York Moors offer plenty of opportunities to make a week of it. Retire to the Star Inn at Harome, a 14th-century thatched inn with a Michelin-starred restaurant and 13 rooms converted from farm buildings.
Details B&B doubles from £240 (thestaratharome.co.uk)

Rows and alleys at Leonardslee Family Vineyards. Below: The Pig in the New Forest

Ancre Hill, Monmouth, Monmouthshire

The 22 acres of biodynamic vines at Ancre Hill produce some of the UK's most exciting low-intervention wines, with an impressive range of sparkling and still white, red and orange wines. Protected from harsh weather by the Cambrian Mountains and the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons), Ancre Hill makes about 30,000 bottles a year from varieties including bacchus, solaris and pinot noir. There is ample opportunity to help with the harvest, including some paid positions, usually throughout October. Further afield you can explore Monmouth, Abergavenny and Hay-on-Wye. For history buffs, Raglan Castle, an impressive 15th-century fortress a ten-minute drive from the vineyard, is well worth a visit. The Angel Hotel in nearby Abergavenny makes a good base, with its fire-warmed restaurant and rural-chic rooms.
Details Room-only doubles from £195 (houseofcaradog.com/the-angel-hotel)

Domaine Hugo, Downton, Wiltshire

Domaine Hugo's biodynamic sparkling wines are arguably some of the UK's best, even in a country that has become renowned for bubbly. Its founder, Hugo Stewart, prefers to plan picking dates as near to the time as possible, to better gauge the ripeness of the fruit, and these tend to be announced on Instagram (@domaine.hugo). Volunteers receive a picnic lunch as well as a bottle to take home. Nearby you'll find Breamore House, a fine Elizabethan manor with an impressive museum, and the New Forest, one of England's most spectacular areas of wilderness, with its ponies, wetlands and walking trails. The Pig in the New Forest is a swanky hotel half an hour's drive away, with a greenhouse restaurant serving produce from its kitchen garden.
Details B&B doubles from £270 (thepighotel.com)

Leonardslee Family Vineyards, Horsham, West Sussex

With a remarkable story attached — the vineyard's owner, Penny Streeter, lived in homeless accommodation before becoming an entrepreneur — Leonardslee is a shining light in England's sparkling wine scene. In 2016 the Streeter family bought the 500-acre estate and turned it into the UK's first golf club and wine estate. The vineyard puts out a call on its website for volunteers for the harvest, usually taking place in early to mid-October, and participants receive a bacon roll breakfast and lunch with a glass of fizz for their efforts (manningsheath.com). The Knepp Estate, a 20-minute drive south, offers the chance to see wild storks and free-roaming ponies, pigs and cattle on its rewilded land. Stay at Leonardslee's Vineyard Hotel amid the vines.
Details B&B doubles from £150 (shop.leonardslee.co.uk)

Why I return to the charming Tarn

Lesser-known Albi in southern France has history and fantastic wine. By Jane Knight

ISTOCKPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

St Cécile cathedral and the Tarn river, Albi

It is definitely what you'd call a heavenly view. Framed by my bedroom window, the magnificent mass of St Cécile cathedral rises above the Tarn river, its 40m tall walls looming over the ramparts of the archbishop's fortified palace. In the soft evening light the cathedral glows pink as bells peal out from the 78m tower spearing the sky.

From my *chambre d'hôtes* in Albi I have a front-row pew to one of the largest brick-built religious buildings on the planet. It looks more fortress than cathedral, demonstrating the strength of the church after the Albigensian Crusade against the heretical Cathars in the first half of the 13th century. That crusade took its name from this beautiful town in southern France. With its mighty cathedral, Toulouse-Lautrec museum and medieval streets with half-timbered houses, Albi has all the ingredients of a classic city break, yet draws a fraction of the crowds you might expect.

Partly that's because the nearest international airport, Toulouse, is an hour's drive away. By rail it's about five hours from Paris to Toulouse, perhaps with a stop in Bordeaux on the way, then an hour-long train trip from Toulouse to Albi.

That's how I arrive, in the hush of a train carriage where nobody shouts into a phone or scrolls Instagram on speaker. We roll in at 7.30pm and it's a 15-minute walk to Villa Caroline, run by the genial Spaniard Mario Lapuente (B&B doubles from £95; villacaroline-albi.com).

The villa's four rustic-chic rooms, with wooden headboards, exposed brick and wood or stone floors, were designed by Lapuente's wife, Patricia, an architect who this year upgraded the bathrooms. My suite, which has a second bedroom and a private kitchen, is the only one with the cathedral panorama, although everyone gets a slice of it from the breakfast terrace.

"We fell in love with that view and the city when my wife came here for an architectural project in 2014," Lapuente says. "And we decided to stay."

It's a sentiment I understand, having spent two years living in the countryside outside Albi in the late Nineties. Back then, so many Brits had settled in the Tarn region, with its hilltop villages and vineyards, that the area was dubbed Kensing-Tarn. In these post-Brexit, post-Covid days they seem thinner on the ground.

The Berbie Palace, which houses the Toulouse-Lautrec museum

During this June visit — my first in 20 years — the cobbled streets of Albi were pleasantly quiet and easy to explore. I start with the cathedral, just across the 11th-century Pont Vieux, which reopened last year after a renovation. The forbidding exterior contrasts sharply with an interior of startling opulence: Renaissance paintings and frescoes cover almost every surface, even the azurite vaults. I could spend hours hunting the hidden self-portraits the artists tucked into the decoration.

Self-portraits also feature in the Toulouse-Lautrec museum, in the adjacent Berbie Palace, once home to the powerful archbishop. The diminutive artist was born in 1864 on the street that now bears his name, although there's little to see at this private house beyond a plaque above the large door and closed shutters. The museum tells a richer story, with artworks of his mother, his favourite horse and, *bien sûr*, dancers of the Moulin Rouge (£9; musee-toulouse-lautrec.com).

On previous visits to Albi I'd ticked off only the headline sights. This time I discover its quieter corners: the peaceful cloisters of St Salvi church, where teenagers lounge with books; the Castelviel quarter behind the cathedral, with its flower-draped, colourful houses; and the Tarn, with verdant riverside walks and flat-bottomed gabare boat trips. From the river and the newly opened footbridge beneath the railway there are more scenic cathedral views.

Eager to explore further, I take the train to nearby Gaillac, namesake of the local AOC wine and a 15-minute chug away. At the station I'm met by Olivier Gesbert from the tour operator VéloFlow, and we ride electric bikes down quiet lanes fringed with vineyards (day tours from £47; veloflow.lokki.rent).

It's a 19-mile cycle to the medieval fortified town of Cordes sur Ciel, high on a rocky hilltop with sweeping views over the surrounding countryside. If the scenery is not quite the "little Tuscany" the tourist board describes, it does come with rolling hills, cypresses, olive trees, stone villages and the odd château.

Better still, there's a pitstop at Domaine Gayrard, with its terrace, vineyard walks, tours and tasting (tours from £9; maison-gayrard.com). Here the organic winemaker Pierre Fabre introduces me to the floral, aromatic ondenc grape that is grown on less than 40 hectares in the Gaillac AOC. "It's an ancient Gaillac variety," he tells me. More emphasis on indigenous grapes, including braucol, prunelart and loin de l'oeil, means that Gaillac wine, once favoured by the Tudor court, is now enjoying a bit of a renaissance. I can also vouch for Gayrard's light and crisp sparkling mauzac, made using the ancestral Gaillacoise method, without added sugar or yeast during the second fermentation.

Cordes sur Ciel is only another half an hour by bike, and on a Monday lunchtime we pretty much have it to ourselves. Within its ramparts are beautifully preserved gothic façades and a scatter of artisan shops selling leatherwork, jewellery and animal sculptures fashioned from metal. At Editions Larroque they make "illuminated books", as they were crafted in the Middle Ages, with leather covers, gold leaf and intricate calligraphy (editions larroque.fr). If you fancy a copy of *Les Templiers* with real stained glass on the cover you'll need a spare £3,600.

Lunch is at Sur les Pavés, a vegetarian restaurant by one of the town gates, where my *plat du jour* is a delicious assortment of grains and vegetables (mains from £12). Food here, and in Albi, feels leagues ahead of where it was when I last came, when menus leant heavily on cassoulet, duck and not much at all for vegetarians or pescatarians like me.

"It has changed a lot. It used to be much heavier," says Rikard Hult, the Swedish chef-patron of L'Épicurien, which he opened 22 years ago on Albi's main square (mains from £17; restaurant lepicurien.com). He serves me a fine Japanese-influenced tuna dish followed by sea bass with a fried nugget of rice stained black with squid ink. Another night I eat equally well at the art deco-style L'Alchimy in the heart of the old town, where the mullet with vegetable vol-au-vent and perfectly cooked cod are excellent (mains from £16; alchimyalbi.fr).

You can stay in one of the ten rooms at L'Alchimy or in its sister property, Hôtel Lapérouse (five minutes' walk away), which opened last year on a square of the same name and is where I spend my final night in Albi (B&B doubles from £116; laperouse-hotel-albi.com).

Named after the 18th-century navigator whose statue stands in the square outside, it feels a little more chain hotel than characterful stay, although the nautical motifs on the bedroom walls are a nice touch. There's a pleasant outdoor pool for cooling off, and breakfast consists of thoughtfully sourced local produce.

Still, it's no match for the breakfast at Villa Caroline, where Lapuente lays out homemade yoghurt, local cheeses, fruit, his mother-in-law's jam, and honey and olive oil from his uncle's farm in Spain. As I tuck in with the other guests, he points at the sky. "Look, peregrine falcons. They nest in the cathedral," he says. Like me, they've found themselves a truly heavenly place to stay.

Need to know

Jane Knight was a guest of Tarn Attractivité (tourisme-tarn.com), Voyage Occitanie (tourisme-occitanie.com) and, prior to an early departure with Eurostar, Radisson Blu London Euston Square (doubles from £149; radissonhotels.com). Fly to Toulouse or take the train via Paris

Your call answered in 3 rings

020·7962·9933

Caribbean Islands

Let us create your perfect holiday. You'll love the experience

WHITE sand beaches, crystal clear waters and a warm tropical climate are only some of the reasons to choose the Caribbean islands for your next holiday.

With each island having its own unique character offering wonderful cuisine, colourful festivals and exciting activities.

Call our travel team today and whichever island you choose, you can expect to make new memories.

Save 30% on all inclusive

Carlisle Bay, Antigua 5*

7 nights fr £**3,845**pp
Flights & hotel

Colony Club, Luxury Collection, Barbados 5*

An iconic and luxurious island retreat, with attentive service that evokes opulence on the wonderful Platinum West Coast. Accommodation lines the beachfront with bespoke activities, and delicious, healthy fine-dining opportunities.

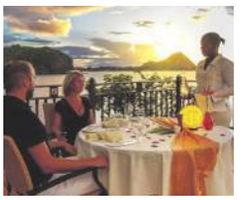
Save 25%

7 nights fr £**2,315**pp
Flights & hotel

The Cove Atlantis, Bahamas 5*

Save 10%
Flights & hotel - 7 nights fr £**3,325**pp

Cap Maison Luxury Resort & Spa, St Lucia 5*



If you prefer a smaller, more sedate St Lucia, then head to one of the island's finest boutique hotels, occupying a stunning location with its own secluded sandy beach and 2 incredible restaurants: The Cliff at Cap and The Naked Fisherman.

Save 15% on half board
Flights & hotel - 7 nights fr £**2,329**pp

Casa de Campo, Dominican Republic 5*

Save 60% on all inclusive + room upgrade
Flights & hotel - 7 nights fr £**2,029**pp

O2 Beach Club & Spa, Barbados 5*

This chic, contemporary beach club offers pure comfort on a powder white beach fringing incredible turquoise waters. This is the ideal setting for an indulgent Caribbean holiday, with gourmet dining, a cosy rooftop lounge, Acqua spa, and a full programme of activities.

Save 45% on all inclusive
Flights & hotel - 7 nights fr £**2,649**pp

Blue Waters Resort & Spa, Antigua 5*

Save 35% on all inclusive
Flights & hotel - 7 nights fr £**3,075**pp

Calabash Hotel, Grenada 5*

Savour the best in fine dining at this award-winning boutique Relais & Chateaux hotel, set in 8 acres on a secluded bay. Enjoy a weekly yoga session, a well-deserved treatment at the Spa at Calabash, or spend time in the sparkling Caribbean Sea, snorkelling, diving or kayaking.

Free all inclusive

7 nights fr £**3,429**pp
Flights & hotel

Moon Palace Jamaica 4*

$250 resort credit + all inclusive
Flights & hotel - 7 nights fr £**1,999**pp

Beaches Resort Villages, Turks & Caicos 5*

Completely de-stress with a luxury break and experience Grace Bay Beach - widely renowned as one of the finest in the region. Bring the kids along to the Pirates Island Waterpark, and enjoy the cuisine at 21 superb restaurants.

Save 50% on all inclusive

7 nights fr £**3,619**pp
Flights & hotel

DialAFlight
Your travel. Personally crafted

CLIENT TRUST ACCOUNT · ATOL Protected · ABTA ABTA No 76705

cruise.co.uk
THE REAL CRUISE PEOPLE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
OCEANIA CRUISES®

BRAND NEW
BETTER THAN 2 FOR 1
5★ CRUISES!

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

Scan Me For More 2 For 1 Deals

ALL 2 FOR 1 CRUISES INCLUDE...

- ✓ House beverage package with complimentary champagne, wine & beer during lunch & dinner
- ✓ Soft drinks, speciality coffees & teas
- ✓ All gratuities
- ✓ Unlimited Wi-Fi
- ✓ Complimentary 24-hour room service
- ✓ 4★ pre-cruise hotel stay
- ✓ Return London flights

5★ OCEANIA 2 FOR 1 ITALIAN & FRENCH RIVIERA WITH ST TROPEZ & MONTE CARLO

25 Sep 2027 - 8 Nights - Oceania Nautica

Cabin (From £pp)	Inside	Veranda
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 1	3239	4439
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 1	3239	4439
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 2	3239	4439
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 2	FREE	FREE

5★ OCEANIA 2 FOR 1 ADRIATIC AZURE WITH CORSICA & PORTOFINO

02 Oct 2027 - 13 Nights - Oceania Nautica

Cabin (From £pp)	Inside	Veranda
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 1	4219	6509
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 1	4219	6509
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 2	4219	6509
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 2	FREE	FREE

5★ OCEANIA 2 FOR 1 VALLETTA & SICILY SERENADE WITH THE GREEK ISLES

15 May 2027 - 10 Nights - Oceania Sirena

Cabin (From £pp)	Inside	Veranda
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 1	3659	4729
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 1	3659	4729
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 2	3659	4729
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 2	FREE	FREE

5★ OCEANIA 2 FOR 1 MEDITERRANEAN MOSAIC: FROM ATHENS TO ROME WITH MALTA

06 May 2027 - 8 Nights - Oceania Allura

Cabin (From £pp)	French Balcony
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 1	4479
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 1	4479
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 2	4479
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 2	FREE

5★ OCEANIA 2 FOR 1 ITALIAN RIVIERA WITH CROATIA & MONTENEGRO

11 Jun 2027 - 10 Nights - Oceania Sirena

Cabin (From £pp)	Inside	Veranda
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 1	4019	5429
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 1	3999	5429
Oceania Cruises Brochure Price Passenger 2	4019	5429
cruise.co.uk Price Passenger 2	FREE	FREE

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THIS TRIP OF A LIFETIME?

- ✓ 1-night 4★ pre-cruise hotel stay*
- ✓ 5★ cruise with Oceania Cruises
- ✓ London flights, resort fees & destination taxes included
- ✓ Call for Manchester & Glasgow regional flights
- ✓ All gratuities & unlimited Wi-Fi
- ✓ Speciality dining restaurants
- ✓ Soft drinks, speciality coffees & teas, Vero water, juices, smoothies & gourmet ice cream
- ✓ Complimentary 24-hour room service
- ✓ Exclusive cruise & stay holiday
- ✓ Dedicated Cruise.co.uk expert cruise consultant
- ✓ Fully protected - your holiday is safe with us, we are fully ABTA & ATOL bonded
- ✓ We are the experts! For over 40 years we have been creating industry leading cruise & stay itineraries

TALK TO ONE OF OUR FRIENDLY CRUISE CONSULTANTS TODAY

0800 408 6207

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday: 9am - 9pm | Sunday 10am - 8pm

ABTA The Travel Association 78024 | ATOL PROTECTED | IATA

TO GET THIS OFFER QUOTE CODE **TIMES-OCEANIA2FOR1**

All fares are per person, based on two adults sharing and our subject to availability. Flights are based from London, regional flights will incur a supplement. Please note Oceania Sirena 15 May 2027 does not have a pre-cruise stay.Transfers are not included. Cabin Upgrades are subject to availability. Please see Cruise.co.uk for full terms & conditions. E&OE

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

MAKUNUDU

ISLAND

**Allow Makunudu Island, Maldives to sweep you into the warm embrace of an original Maldivian retreat.
A rare haven, beautifully untouched, that even for those who travel the world, retains a special place in their heart.
Slip off your shoes and slip into island time…**

7 nights from **£1,849**

Flights, beach resort incl full board and speedboat transfers

• Stunning beach • Superb house reef • Non-motorised watersports (payable locally) • Dive centre • Boutique spa

SPECIAL OFFER Room discount — saving over £900 per couple

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

TF TRUST · CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED · Which? Awards 2026 BRAND OF THE YEAR

Call ***TRAILFINDERS*** on **020 7938 0207** or visit your local Travel Centre

Prices are per person based on a twin/double share & valid for selected May departures. Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel. Offers are subject to availability & restrictions may apply. Prices correct at time of going to print on 10 Sep 26.

IATA · TRAILFINDERS FINANCIAL PROTECTION · ATOL LICENCE: 1458 caa.co.uk

Trustpilot ★★★★★

No.1 TOUR OPERATOR

OCEANIA CRUISES®

Antillean Island Sojourn

MIAMI TO MIAMI

12 Days | 25 November 2026 | *Oceania Vista*

Veranda Stateroom Fares per guest from*

WAS £4,339 | **NOW £2,170**

ALWAYS INCLUDES

ALL SPECIALITY DINING, SHIPBOARD GRATUITIES & COMPLIMENTARY WI-FI
PLUS CHOICE OF WINE & BEER BY THE GLASS OR SHORE EXCURSION CREDIT

EXCEPTIONAL SAVINGS

UP TO **50% OFF**

023 8010 2342 | OCEANIACRUISES.COM | CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL ADVISOR

Scan this QR code to view **Special Offer.**

Oceania Regatta, Oceania Insignia, Oceania Nautica, Oceania Sirena, Oceania Marina, Oceania Riviera, Oceania Vista, Oceania Allura, Oceania Sonata & Oceania Aurelia are registered marks of Oceania Cruises Ltd.
TERMS & CONDITIONS: *Offers, fares and itineraries are accurate as of 10 September 2026 and are subject to change or withdrawal without prior notice. Advertised fares may fluctuate and are subject to change. Exceptional Savings Offer is valid from until 3 November 2026. Savings of up to 50% off are available on select categories on select sailings, subject to change and capacity controlled. Savings amounts vary per sailing and category and are per person. VIS261125 voyage features 50% savings on select categories, Mention Code ZZ. Certain exclusions apply. Visit www.OceaniaCruises.com for current pricing. All fares are per person in Pounds Sterling, valid for residents of the United Kingdom, based on double occupancy (unless otherwise noted). Oceania Cruises reserves the right to correct errors or omissions and to change any and all fares, fees, promotions and surcharges at any time. Complete Terms and Conditions may be found at www.OceaniaCruises.com/legal.

ABTA · CLIA

cruise.co.uk | THE CRUISE & STAY EXPERTS
THE REAL CRUISE PEOPLE

cruise.co.uk EXCLUSIVE

Escorted! No Fly Canada In The Fall

WITH ESCORTED BIG APPLE, NIAGARA FALLS, MONTREAL & TORONTO

ULTIMATE ESCORTED NO FLY CANADA & USA TOUR

ESCORTED TOUR cruise.co.uk ONLY BOOKABLE THROUGH

BUCKET LIST COLLECTION

EXCLUSIVE & ESCORTED
USA & Canada Adventures

CRUISE FROM SOUTHAMPTON
Onboard The World Famous Queen Mary 2

EXPERT-LED TOURS
In Toronto, Niagara & New York

Experience the ultimate transatlantic adventure with this exclusive Cruise and stay holiday. Begin your journey in timeless elegance onboard Queen Mary 2, sailing from Southampton to New York. Enjoy hotel stays in Montreal, Toronto, Niagara and New York, along with guided tours of this region's most iconic landmarks. End your holiday with another spectacular cruise back to Southampton on Queen Mary 2.

CRUISE

DAY 1: EMBARK 5★ QUEEN MARY 2 IN SOUTHAMPTON, UK
Today, you will embark 5★ Queen Mary 2 in Southampton for your 14-night cruise.

DAY 8: NEW YORK, USA

DAY 10: BOSTON, USA

DAY 12: SYDNEY (NOVA SCOTIA), CANADA

DAY 13: CHARLOTTETOWN, CANADA

ESCORTED TOUR

DAY 15: DISEMBARK IN QUEBEC & TRANSFER TO MONTREAL, CANADA
After disembarking your ship in Quebec, you will be transferred to Montreal for your 1-night 4★ hotel stay.

DAY 16: TRANSFER TO TORONTO, CANADA
After checking out of your hotel, you will be transferred to Toronto for a 2-night 4★ hotel stay. This will give you ample time to explore the city's iconic landmarks & diverse culinary scene.

DAY 17: TORONTO, CANADA
Included: Toronto Walking Tour With CN Tower
Today, enjoy a walking tour of Toronto and view the stunning CN Tower. This vibrant capital of Ontario is a multicultural metropolis that's buzzing with energy and excitement. From world-class museums and restaurants to lively festivals and sports events, there's never a dull moment.

DAY 18: TRANSFER TO NIAGARA, CANADA
After checking out of your hotel, your journey will take you to the iconic Niagara Falls for a memorable 2-night hotel stay. Explore the stunning natural wonder, along with the many attractions, restaurants and scenic viewpoints that make this destination truly unforgettable.

DAY 19: NIAGARA, CANADA
Included: Niagara Walking Tour
Niagara Falls is a majestic destination that draws millions of visitors each year. Experience the thundering power and natural beauty of one of the world's most iconic waterfalls with a guided walking tour of Niagara.

DAY 20: TRANSFER TO NEW YORK, USA
After checking out of your hotel, you will be transferred to New York for a 2-night hotel stay. Once there, you'll have the opportunity to experience the energy and excitement of this iconic city.

DAY 21: NEW YORK, USA
Included: New York Walking Tour
Experience the magic of The Big Apple! Discover its iconic landmarks, world-class museums, diverse neighbourhoods, and unparalleled energy. From the glitz of Times Square to the tranquillity of Central Park, immerse yourself in the unique spirit and vibrancy of New York City with a guided walking tour.

CRUISE

DAY 22: CHECKOUT & EMBARK 5★ QUEEN MARY 2 IN NEW YORK, USA
After checking out of your hotel, you will be transferred to the port in New York to embark 5★ Queen Mary 2 for your 7-night cruise to Southampton.

DAY 29: DISEMBARK IN SOUTHAMPTON, UK
After arriving back in Southampton, you will disembark your ship and begin your onward journey home.

INCLUDED TOURS...

Toronto Walking Tour With CN Tower

Niagara Walking Tour

New York Walking Tour

WHAT'S INCLUDED...

- ✓ **No Deposit & interest-free monthly payments**
- ✓ **Destination expert for help & guidance**
- ✓ **7-night escorted Canada & New York tour with expert local guides**
- ✓ **Skip the flights! Round trip from Southampton**
- ✓ **Exclusive walking tours in Toronto, Niagara & New York**
- ✓ Dedicated in-resort Cruise.co.uk representative for help
- ✓ Exclusive Cruise.co.uk coach transfers throughout
- ✓ Spend 21 nights sailing on the world's most famous ship, Queen Mary 2
- ✓ Exclusive cruise & stay holiday
- ✓ Dedicated Cruise.co.uk expert consultant
- ✓ We are the experts! For over 40 years we have been creating industry leading cruise & stay itineraries
- ✓ Fully protected - your holiday is safe with us, we are fully ABTA & ATOL bonded

AVAILABLE DATES

Date / £pp	Inside	Ocean View	Balcony	Princess Grill
10 Sep 2027	4899	6399	6399	12599
15 Sep 2028	4999	6599	6599	14499

Scan Me For More Information

cruise.co.uk

CUNARD

No Deposit & Interest-Free Monthly Payments

TALK TO ONE OF OUR FRIENDLY CRUISE CONSULTANTS TODAY

BARBARA

EVE

ERICA

0800 408 6206
Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday: 9am - 9pm | Sunday 10am - 8pm

ABTA 78024 ATOL IATA

TO GET THIS OFFER QUOTE CODE
TIMES-NOFLYCANADA

All fares are per person and based on two adults sharing. No deposit & interest-free monthly payments is based on our interest free monthly payments scheme which is applicable to selected 2026-2028 cruises when booked more than 9 months in advance of sailing, please speak to your consultant to confirm the date of your 1st monthly installment. See Cruise.co.uk for full terms & conditions. Some of our packages include elements that are natural occurrences, such as wildlife viewings. However, your viewing of such elements cannot be guaranteed and is subject to change based on weather conditions, climate change, and Wildlife sightings. Please see Cruise.co.uk for full terms and conditions. Calls are recorded for Marketing & Training Purposes. E&OE

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

SEABOURN®
Luxury Meets Exploration

Caribbean Gems

Experience a haven of serenity on the shores of Barbados • Relish views of the Windward Islands • Enjoy caviar and Champagne on a deserted Caribbean beach

Days 1-3 **Barbados**
Fly to Barbados and spend three nights in an enviable beachfront location on the 'Platinum' west coast.

Day 4 **Board Seabourn Ovation**

Day 5 **Relaxing at sea**

Day 6 **St Kitts & Nevis**
Enjoy Seabourn's signature "Caviar in the Surf" beach barbecue on Carambola Beach.

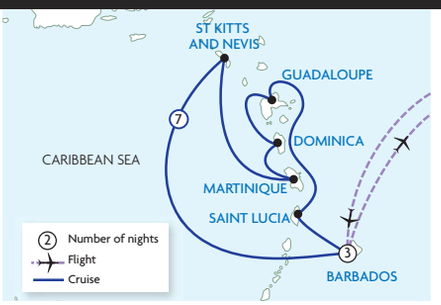
Day 7 **Martinique**

Day 8 **Dominica**

Day 9 **Guadeloupe**
Discover the fascinating melting pot of colourful Caribbean and French culture.

Day 10 **Saint Lucia**
Enjoy the scenery of volcanic peaks, providing a striking backdrop to Saint Lucia's tranquil bays and sandy beaches.

Days 11-12 **Disembark in Barbados and fly home**



- Ultra luxury, all inclusive cruises worldwide
- Intimate ships for just 250 - 600 guests
- All suites are Oceanview and above
- World-class dining and culinary experiences

Your exclusive **TRAILFINDERS** *holiday includes*

Saving over £1,650 per couple

- ***Direct flights***
- *3 nights 5★* ***all inclusive*** *Barbados beach resort*
- *7 night cruise aboard Seabourn Ovation incl:*
  - *Fine dining*
  - *All drinks including welcome Champagne*
  - *Onboard gratuities*
  - *Wi-fi*
- *Private transfers*

12 day holiday from	
VERANDA SUITE **£5,399pp**	PENTHOUSE SUITE **£7,749pp**

Departs 3 Feb 27. Similar Caribbean holidays also available from Dec 26 to Jan 27.

LUXURY SMALL SHIP

Seabourn Ovation
Guest Capacity: 600
Crew Capacity: 450

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

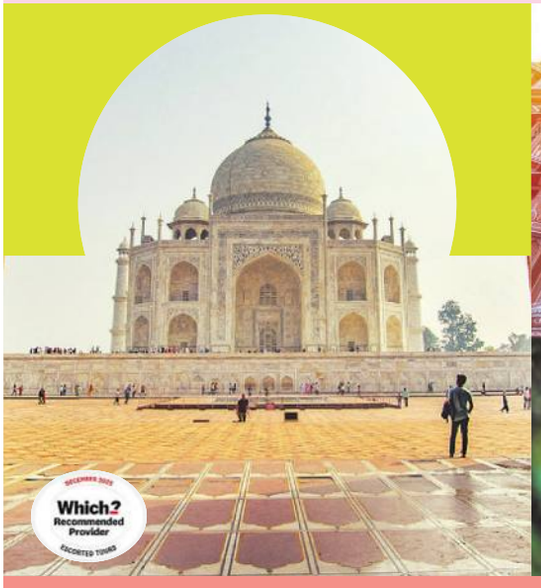
TF TRUST · CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED · Which? Travel Awards 2026 Board of the Year

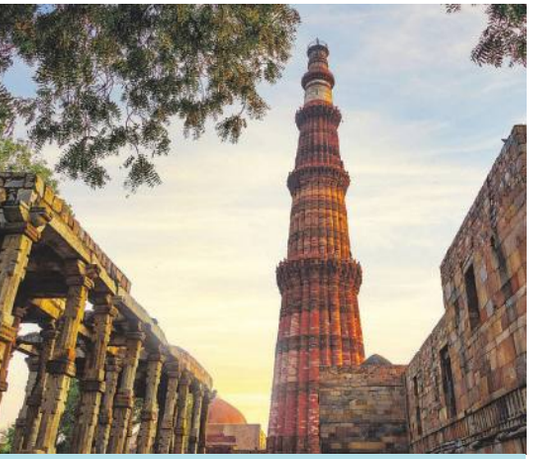
Call **TRAILFINDERS** Cruise Team on **020 7938 0209** or visit your local Travel Centre

Prices are per person based on a twin/double share. Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel. Offers are subject to availability & restrictions may apply. Prices correct at time of going to print 10 Sep 26.

IATA · ABTA · ATOL LICENCE: 1458 caa.co.uk
Trustpilot ★★★★★
No.1 CRUISE AGENCY

Smaller groups. Bigger discoveries.





Small group tours of 10-16

Expert local guides

80+ incredible destinations

Jules Verne
Step into the story

IATA · ABTA The Travel Association

India tours from **£795**pp - pay just **£27 deposit***

vjv.com **020 3811 4124**

*T&Cs apply. For full details see vjv.com/terms-conditions.

Best of Travel

Whether you'd like to escape to the other side of the world, or venture somewhere closer to home, these travel ideas and tips are sure to fire up the imagination.

Read more online! Visit *thebestofliving.com* and follow 𝕏 @bestofsocial__

Sea your only view

On the shores of Limassol, AMARA is an exquisite expression of contemporary Mediterranean luxury. Framed by endless sea views, its elegant suites, golden beach and exceptional wellness invite a slower rhythm of living. Culinary artistry takes centre stage at Matsuhisa, Beefbar, Ristorante Locatelli and Nerea, complemented by intuitive service and an effortless sense of place. Here, every moment is beautifully considered, from sunrise over the Mediterranean to evenings beneath the stars.

Discover AMARA at *amarahotel.com*

AMARA

Discovering the cloudforests of Ecuador

High in the biodiverse Chocó region, 90 minutes from Quito, Tandayapa Bird Lodge offers a peaceful cloudforest retreat where hummingbirds and drifting mist frame the morning landscape.

The lodge combines comfortable accommodation with forest views, regional cuisine and Ecuadorian hospitality. While tailored to birdwatchers and photographers, the surrounding habitat caters to a wide range of travellers. Nearby reserves protect native wildlife, including Andean bears, while regional excursions offer visits to traditional coffee and chocolate farms, the Equator Monument, or local adventure sports such as ziplining and rafting.

Positioned as an accessible base for exploring Ecuador, the lodge also arranges onward travel to the Amazon and the Galápagos Islands. A variety of tailored packages ensures an engaging, memorable stay for families, naturalists and holidaymakers alike.

Plan your cloudforest journey at *tandayapabirdlodge.com*

Tandayapa Bird Lodge ECUADOR

Where the mountains meet the sea. Discovering Costa Rica's wildlife paradise

Costa Rica has a well-earned reputation for world-leading environmental protection and extraordinary biological intensity. This small Central American country is home to about 5 per cent of the world's biodiversity. For wildlife enthusiasts, its crown jewel is the Osa region on the southern Pacific coast, containing about 2.5 per cent of the world's biodiversity in an area smaller than Greater London.

A traveler's bucket list might include sloths and howler monkeys, birds such as scarlet macaws and fiery-billed aracaris, Costa Rica's signature red-eyed tree and poison dart frogs, as well as the humpback whales and sea turtles just offshore.

Diversity of life is driven by the extraordinary environments of Costa Rica's southern Pacific coast. One such example is the ecosystem to the coastal range above Marino Ballena National Park near the village of Uvita. Pristine beaches are bordered by mangroves, and the ground rises from sea level to 1,200 meters within four kilometers. The dramatic change in elevation creates different climatic zones that sustain animals across seasons, and the rainforest-fed rivers rush vital nutrients that feed marine life as they fall to the ocean in spectacular waterfalls.

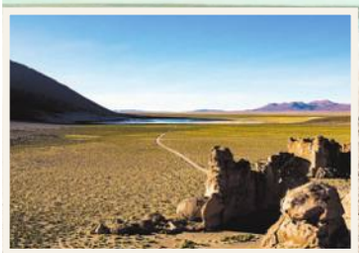
Rancho Pacifico lives at the heart of this ecosystem. Perched with stunning ocean views 650 meters directly above the signature Whale's Tail in the Marino Ballena National Park, featured in the Times for its extraordinary birdwatching, and supporting local reforestation projects.

While centered on nature, with five-star private treehouses and villas surrounded by rainforest, the hotel delivers world-class service and dining, led by career hotelier Jennie Peterson and her biologist husband Gregory Wyatt. They are proud to have earned their Michelin Key and to have been named TripAdvisor's number 3 luxury hotel in Central America for 2026.

Explore at *ranchopacifico.com* or scan the QR code

RP

Bolivia, beyond the expected



There are places you merely visit, and places that stay with you long after returning home. Bolivia belongs firmly in the second category. From the vast, blindingly white expanse of the world-famous Uyuni Salt Flats to the dramatic peaks of the high Andes, the country offers extraordinary travel experiences far beyond the standard tourist itinerary. Yet its true appeal lies in the genuine personal encounters along the way: spending meaningful time with welcoming local communities, discovering ancient living traditions, and travelling through diverse landscapes that feel almost otherworldly.

At Thaki Voyage, we believe the most memorable journeys are those that connect you deeply with a destination. Based in La Paz and drawing on more than 15 years of dedicated local expertise, our specialist team designs fully tailor-made itineraries that combine exceptional, remote locations with authentic cultural experiences and attentive, thoughtful service.

Whether exploring the striking high-altitude landscapes of the Altiplano, travelling across the vast and remote expanses of Sud Lípez, taking in the serene, spiritual beauty of Lake Titicaca, or venturing deep into the rich biodiversity of the Amazon basin, every single itinerary is individually crafted to reflect precisely how you wish to experience the country. For discerning travellers seeking something far beyond the obvious pathways, Bolivia offers a rare sense of quiet, unspoiled discovery and a travel experience that feels entirely your own.

Plan your tailor-made journey through Bolivia with Thaki Voyage at *travels-bolivia.com*

THAKI VOYAGE

Escape to a private island in Venice

Set on Isola delle Rose, a private island surrounded by the Venetian Lagoon, JW Marriott Venice Resort & Spa offers a unique retreat just moments from the heart of Venice. Discover elegant rooms, suites and private retreats, unwind at the JW Venice Spa, or savour exceptional dining at Sagra Rooftop Restaurant, with authentic Italian flavours and panoramic views. With lush gardens, pools, padel courts and curated activities, the resort blends the tranquillity of an island escape with effortless access to Venice. A complimentary shuttle connects guests to St. Mark's Square, making it easy to explore the city before returning to your private oasis.

Discover your Venetian escape at JW Marriott Venice Resort & Spa.

Visit our website to explore the resort and plan your stay *marriott.com/en-us/hotels/vcejw-jw-marriott-venice-resort-and-spa/overview/*

JW MARRIOTT VENICE

Best of Travel is an independent spread of advertorial from Hurst Media Company. While every care is taken in ensuring that the content is in compliance with the Advertising Standards Authority and The UK Code of Non-Broadcast Advertising and Direct & Promotional Marketing (CAP Codes), the publishers assume no responsibility in the effect rising therefrom, and readers are advised to seek professional advice before acting on any information. To advertise with Best of Travel, please call Hurst Media Company on 020 3478 6017

An immersive journey through the cultural heart of Milan

Curated and led by an expert team based in Italy and the UK, these gently paced, escorted cultural tours prioritise client comfort, hospitality and exclusive private access. Guests are welcomed warmly across Europe, exploring historic destinations in relaxed, thoughtful company.

This January, discover Italy's creative pulse on an exclusive six-day exploration of Milan. Once an intellectual and artistic powerhouse of Renaissance court life, the city's remarkable legacy endures across magnificent civic architecture, celebrated art galleries and intimate house museums. The itinerary highlights this rich heritage through several private visits, culminating in an evening of world-class opera at the renowned Teatro alla Scala.

Visit *jameshilltravels.com* or call 01869 906043. ATOL 12760, ABTOT 5630.

JAMES HILL TRAVELS

Mallorca, at a different pace

In the north-east of the island, near Capdepera - crowned by its medieval castle - and just minutes from Cala Agulla and Cala Mesquida, there is a Mallorca that moves at a different pace. Here, a country estate dating from 1685 is home to Predi Son Jaumell, a rural retreat created for those who understand luxury as time, space and tranquility.

The hotel has just 24 individually designed suites. Original vaulted ceilings, natural fabrics, private terraces and views across the countryside sit alongside serene Mediterranean design. Within 3,000 square metres of gardens, among holm oaks, almond trees and carob trees, days unfold beside the pool, with a book in the shade, or exploring the coves and landscapes of the coastline.

Food is central to the experience. At Bistró Llavors, beside the pool, Mallorcan tradition is reimagined with a light, creative touch, using local produce alongside fruit, vegetables and herbs freshly picked from the estate's kitchen garden. A table beneath the veranda, a glass at sunset and no need to rush.

Predi Son Jaumell is not about filling every hour, but about giving each moment more meaning. It is an intimate base from which to discover Mallorca's landscapes, culture and flavours, and a place to return to whenever it is time to reconnect with what truly matters.

Discover a more intimate side of Mallorca. Book directly at *hotelsonjaumell.com* using code TRAVEL10 and enjoy exclusive benefits.

PREDI SON JAUMELL HOTEL RURAL

Win a luxury winter escape at 360 Hotel *Worth up to £5,600!*

Set on an isolated hilltop in South Iceland with uninterrupted views extending to Hekla and Eyjafjallajökull, 360 Hotel Boutique & Spa provides an understated, spacious retreat designed to let the dramatic surrounding landscape come to you.

One lucky reader will win an exceptional two-night stay for two guests in the hotel's flagship 100-square-metre 360 Suite. The prize includes daily breakfast and dinner at Hnaus, where Icelandic Chef of the Year 2024 Hinrik Lárusson prepares seasonal menus using ingredients sourced from local regional producers.

Guests will also enjoy full access to the outdoor geothermal pools, cold plunge and sauna cabin. During the winter months, the remote hilltop location offers an ideal vantage point for viewing the Northern Lights directly from the property, supported by a dedicated aurora wake-up service.

Situated conveniently close to the Golden Circle and the southern coast, this family-owned five-star property - the first Icelandic member of Preferred Hotels & Resorts - offers a refined balance of space, quiet and authentic hospitality.

To enter, follow the link below and simply fill in your details, the stay is valid between 25 October 2026 and 1 April 2027. Terms and conditions apply.

Book now at *360hotel.com*

To enter visit *thebestofliving.com/win/hotel360_sept26/*

360 HOTEL
BOUTIQUE HOTEL AND SPA

Preserving every corner of the Amazon rainforest

For more than three decades, Pantiacolla Tours has guided visitors through the diverse and protected ecosystems of Peru's Manu National Park. Travelling into this pristine basin offers an authentic, direct encounter with the vast flora and fauna of the rainforest, alongside the Indigenous communities who have inhabited the region for generations.

Walk beneath the canopy-forming forest, including the magnificent 50-metre Lupuna and the even taller Shihuahaco tree. The upper branches shelter howler, spider and capuchin monkeys, while ground-level wildlife includes giant anteaters, tapirs and, occasionally, the elusive jaguar. Along the riverbanks, vibrant macaws gather at mineral-rich clay licks, caimans bask in quiet waters, and family groups of giant otters hunt in the oxbow lakes.

Photo credit: Andrew Fedoruk

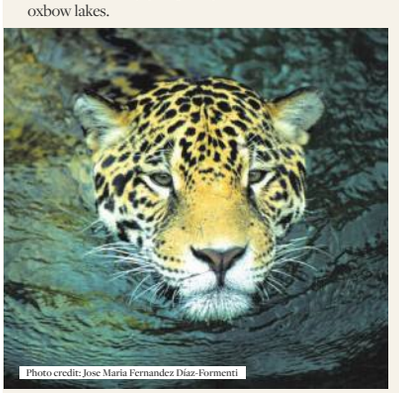


Photo credit: Jose Maria Fernandez Diaz-Formenti

Beyond its extraordinary biodiversity, the park plays a crucial role in global ecological stability. Amid shifting climate patterns, extreme weather and environmental challenges, rainforest preservation remains vital. Led by experienced naturalist guides, visitors gain valuable insight into the mechanics of the Amazonian ecosystem, examining how these forests store carbon, regulate hydrological cycles and sustain local populations.

A journey through Manu National Park provides a deep, immersive look at a complex habitat, illustrating why the protection of the Amazon basin remains essential to the entire planet's long-term environmental health.

Discover Manu National Park with Pantiacolla Tours at *pantiacolla.com*

PANTIACOLLA
A Natural High

Explore the musical heart of historic Salzburg

Few films have captured a destination quite like The Sound of Music, and Salzburg now invites visitors to experience that story in a new way.

Opening on September 20 at Hellbrunn Palace, Sound of Music Salzburg is the world's first museum dedicated to the musical and film. Set beside the original Gazebo, the exhibition brings together cinematic history, stage success and the true story of the von Trapp family through immersive projections and multimedia installations.

For culture seekers dreaming of Austria, this promises to be an unforgettable addition to the city.

Photos: 1. Film poster ©"THE SOUND OF MUSIC" 1965 20th Century Studios, Inc. 2. Maria von Trapp at Nonnberg Abbey © Archives of the Benedictine Women's Abbey of Nonnberg.

Discover where it all began at *salzburgmuseum.at/en/locations/soundofmusicsalzburg*

SALZBURG MUSEUM

HURTIGRUTEN
Find Your Norway
with at least
15% off
2027 Fly Cruises
Flights from London + Airport Transfers + Pre-night in Bergen hotel + Wi-Fi on board + All-inclusive Meals + Beverage package
Signature VOYAGES
The Svalbard Line
Bergen – Longyearbyen – Bergen | May – Sep 2027
16 days from £3,760pp
5th Sep 2027 departure
MARCH 2026 Which? Recommended Provider OCEAN CRUISES
Call 0208 003 9832 | Visit hurtigruten.com | Contact your preferred travel agent
Scan here for more information
Terms and Conditions: Price is correct at time of printing and is subject to availability. See website for full terms and conditions. Image: © Shutterstock.
Travel with Confidence ABTA V7545

MercuryHolidays
Altogether Better

Excellent Trustpilot

Escape to Paradise in the Maldives

1 Week Premium All-Inclusive from £1,649

Adaaran Select Meedhupparu ★★★★

This picture-perfect resort, with its pristine white-sand beach, spectacular house reef, tranquil spa, and a great choice of facilities, is the perfect setting for an unforgettable Maldivian escape.

What's Included

- ✔ Return flights from London. Flights from a choice of 9 regional airports are available
- ✔ 1 week in a Beach Villa
- ✔ All meals daily in up to four restaurants plus selected brands of alcoholic and soft drinks in a choice of up to four bars
- ✔ Domestic flight and speedboat transfers
- ✔ **35% booking** discount on your hotel stay

Added Value

- ✔ **FREE** dolphin-watching excursion

2026 and 2027 Escapes for Less!

Premium All-Inclusive		1 Week Was	1 Week NOW	10 Nights Was	10 Nights NOW
Oct 2026	fr.	~~£2,015~~	£1,915	~~£2,789~~	£2,689
Nov 2026	fr.	~~£2,205~~	£2,105	~~£2,679~~	£2,579
Dec 2026	fr.	~~£2,219~~	£2,119	~~£2,695~~	£2,595
Jan 2027	fr.	~~£2,469~~	£2,369	~~£3,085~~	£2,985
Feb 2027	fr.	~~£2,489~~	£3,059	~~£3,059~~	£2,959
Mar 2027	fr.	~~£2,349~~	£2,249	~~£2,999~~	£2,899
Apr 2027	fr.	~~£1,779~~	£1,679	~~£2,209~~	£2,109
May 2027	fr.	~~£1,749~~	**£1,649**	~~£2,199~~	£2,099

Other months and durations available

Beach Holiday Sale
£100 PP
off ALL 2026/27
Beach Holidays
Sale Ends 17th Sept

To book call us free on **0800 098 4288** or visit **www.mercuryholidays.co.uk**

Advert ID: **MMEE42**

ABTA Travel with Confidence

View Online

BEACH SALE: Save £100pp on ALL 2026 and 2027 Beach Holidays, applies to adults only on new bookings. Quote BEACH100. Sale ends 17/09/26. 'From' price applies to departures 02-08/05/27. Please note availability is limited for our lead-in 'from' prices. Prices were accurately costed on 08/09/26 and are subject to change since going to print due to airline availability. All offers are subject to availability and can be withdrawn without notice. Terms and conditions apply. Prices based on flights out of London; other regional airports are available and may be at a supplement. Prices are per person based on 2 adults sharing. Our hotel costs will not change. For further details and terms and conditions, please visit **www.mercuryholidays.co.uk.**

GETTY IMAGES

Late deals

Book Canada, Morocco, Bali or Cornwall

Thousand Islands National Park, Ontario, Canada. Below: a spice stall in the souks of Marrakesh, Morocco

UK

Long weekend in Pembrokeshire

With a wonderful restaurant, delicate arched windows and some of the prettiest wallpaper in Pembrokeshire, Penally Abbey is not your average Tenby-area hotel. And with clifftop walks beckoning in the national park next door, you're not going to have an average winter weekend if you book it. So why not settle into one of sofas by the open fire and stretch your stay? Between November 1 and December 23 three B&B nights can be had for the price of two, starting at £660 for a double (penally-abbey.com). That should leave you with the budget for one of its magnificent, £35 afternoon teas.

Cornish beach break

There's a lot more to Cornwall than summer holidays, as you'll discover if you book a discounted week at Three Mile Beach. A collection of posh two to four-bedroom beach houses just off Gwithian beach in St Ives Bay, they're reduced by up 20 per cent before March 27 next year, with seven nights' self-catering for four from £1,264 (threemilebeach.co.uk). Then it's time to draw up a list of must-dos. A landscape painting course at the Newlyn School of Art perhaps, or a clifftop foraging walk, interspersed with fireside pints at the Gurnard's Head near Zennor, exhibitions at Tate St Ives and long, cosy evenings by your beach house wood-burner.

EUROPE

Half-term Greek getaway

October half-term may seem a little late for one of Mark Warner's beach-club holidays at Paleros on the west coast of mainland Greece, but if you're there for its mouthwatering array of complimentary activities, you'll find autumn a much better time to be active than in high summer's searing heat. Sailing, tennis, padel, cycling and yoga are included, along with buzzing kids' clubs — and if you enter the discount code LOYAL100 when you book you'll get a 21 per cent discount. From October 25 seven nights' half-board starts from £1,124pp, including flights (markwarner.co.uk).

A luxury North Atlantic cruise

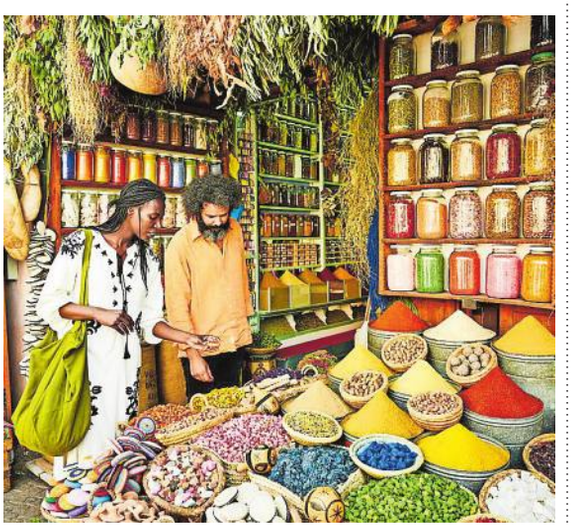
Book ahead for a taste of the North Atlantic next summer. On this Explora Journeys cruise, sailing from Reykjavik on June 2, you can explore Iceland's wild Westfjords, go whale-spotting in the Faroes and wander Lerwick and Edinburgh as you make your way to Southampton. On board the luxury all-suite Explora IV there's a choice of bars and eight restaurants. Seven nights' all-inclusive is down 25 per cent to £5,100pp (explorajourneys.com). Fly to Reykjavik.

Autumn in the French Camargue

The weather's finally cooling off in the Camargue, at the mouth of the Rhône in southern France. The autumn rains are coming too, while waves of migratory birds add to the restlessness. It's a fascinating time to visit, and Le Mas de Peint is one of the region's comfiest perches. Set on a 1,200-acre cattle ranch and rice farm, this small hotel offers horse riding, 4x4 wetland safaris and mountain biking, with the ancient town of Arles on hand whenever you need a change of pace. Until October 14 Kirker is offering four B&B nights there for the price of three, from £1,123pp, including flights (kirkerholidays.com).

Tulip-season cruise in the Low Countries

The luxury river-cruise specialist Scenic is shaving 15 per cent off the price of its Windmills, Tulips and Belgian Delights cruise on April 12-19, when the hyacinths are in bloom and the first of the tulips are starting to flower. There are plenty of other attractions, including a bike ride to the 19 windmills of Kinderdijk, Arnhem's dramatic wartime history and Antwerp's vibrant fashion scene. But there's no doubting the main attraction — the tour of Keukenhof, home to seven million of the world's favourite flowering bulbs. Seven nights' all-inclusive starts at £3,081pp, including flights (scenic.cruises).



Guided hiking trip in Croatia

Autumn is the time for hikers to turn towards the Mediterranean, and this guided Walks and Coastal Towns of Croatia itinerary from Explore promises a rich taste of it. Travelling from Zagreb to Split, it explores some of the country's finest landscapes over the course of five moderately challenging hikes, including the Plitvice Lakes, the limestone crags of Dabarski kukovi and the deep chasm of the Paklenica gorge. Two dates are discounted, with seven nights' B&B from September 26 starting at £1,560pp — a £320 saving (explore.co.uk). Fly to Zagreb and from Split.

MID AND LONG HAUL

A gastronomic tour of Morocco

Check out the menu on Intrepid's 11-night Moroccan Real Food adventure. Amazigh tagines, stuffed medfouna bread, Chefchaouen goat's cheese, the sweet and savoury pastilla pies of Fez... over 12 days, as you circle from Casablanca to Marrakesh, you'll try them all, along with locally grown almonds, figs and walnuts. There's time too to meet the farmers who fill the country's larders. Five autumn departures are discounted, with 11 nights' B&B from October 2 down 20 per cent to £927pp, including some extra meals (intrepidtravel.com). Fly to Casablanca.

Safari in southern Africa

G Adventures' upmarket Geluxe tours offer characterful accommodation and a gentler pace, which is just what you'll want on this Botswana and Zimbabwe tour at the end of the dry season. The wildlife comes courtesy of Hwange and Chobe national parks, which are home to large elephant populations as well as big cats, wild dogs, and impala and zebra herds. An old-school tented safari camp on days six and seven provide your most distinctive overnight stay. Two November departures have discounts, with seven nights' full board down 20 per cent to £3,519pp (gadventures.com). Fly to Victoria Falls and from Kasane.

A luxury resort in Bali

An early-winter trip to Bali looks like a canny option for bargain-hunters this year. Thanks to the supersized El Niño, Indonesia's November rains are expected to arrive later and be lighter when they do fall. To further sweeten the deal, Luxury Escapes is offering big price cuts on the five-star Apurva Kempinski Bali resort. Marching down to the sea in a series of cliff-hugging suites, it looks more like a temple complex than a hotel. From November 12 seven nights' half-board starts at £1,932pp, including flights — a 44 per cent saving (luxuryescapes.com).

A motorhome tour of Canada

A rich mix of landscapes awaits in southern Ontario. Niagara Falls and Algonquin Park are the obvious ones, the latter home to an incredible mosaic of lakes and forest. But book a Southern Ontario Highlights motorhome trip from Canadian Affair and you can go wine-tasting in Prince Edward County and kayaking in the Thousand Islands National Park. Vehicle discounts are as high as 50 per cent at the moment, and 14 nights' self-catering from May 6 — just as the weather begins to warm up but before the mosquitoes arrive — starts at £956pp, including flights (canadianaffair.com).

Sean Newsom

NEW! FJORDS IN FOCUS

A Wildlife & Photography Voyage with Expert Guides

7 nights
16 August 2027

From (inside)
£1999pp

FREE BINOCULARS
worth £130 for first 10 bookings!

Meet John Dunn

Wildlife Tour Guide, Shetland-Based Naturalist & Natural History Writer

Jon is a natural history writer, photographer and wildlife tour guide based in the Shetland Isles.

His written work features in BBC Wildlife, acclaimed field guides like Britain's Sea Mammals, and narrative non-fiction books, Orchid Summer and The Glitter in the Green.

Meet Sarah Cuttle

Professional Horticultural Photographer

A 25-year career has taken Sarah across the UK and Europe, working for many world-class magazines and publishers.

She is a regular contributor to Gardeners' World magazine and is one of a handful of photographers who works with the Royal Horticultural Society on a number of projects.

Your Itinerary:

Day 1 - Embark Oceania Nautica In Southampton, UK
Your unforgettable luxury voyage begins today. Travel to Southampton and board Oceania Nautica to set sail on a scenic Norwegian escape.

Day 2 - Day At Sea
Included: Marine Wildlife Watch & Garden Photography Talk Wake up and enjoy breathtaking views of the fjords of Norway before attending a welcome talk with Sarah and Jon. Later, join Jon on the top deck for a marine wildlife watch, scanning the North Sea for Minke whales, dolphins, and migrating seabirds, and attend Sarah's garden and landscape photography talk.

Day 3 - Stavanger, Norway
Included: Stavanger Botanic Garden Excursion & Wildlife Of Norway Talk Arrive in Stavanger for an included excursion to the serene Stavanger Botanic Garden, where Sarah will be on hand to help you capture stunning plant portraits and landscapes. Back onboard, enjoy a presentation by Jon on the "Wildlife of Norway," detailing the magnificent white-tailed eagles, native flora, & the coastal wildlife of the Scandinavian landscape.

Day 4 - Måløy, Norway
Included: Invite-Only Cocktail Party Enjoy a day at leisure exploring the coastal charm of Måløy. Later, you'll join an exclusive private cocktail party hosted by Jon and Sarah, complete with live music and drinks.

Day 5 - Rosendal, Norway
Included: Baroniet Rosendal Excursion & Botany Photography Talk Today, explore the majesty of Baroniet Rosendal, Norway's only barony and Scandinavia's smallest castle. Tour the 17th-century estate and explore the magnificent Renaissance and rose gardens with Sarah. After this excursion, Sarah will host an intriguing talk on the historic importance of botany in photography.

Day 6 - Haugesund, Norway
Included: Explorers Of Scandinavia Talk Spend a relaxing morning ashore exploring Haugesund. Once back at sea, join Jon Dunn for an insightful lecture on Scandinavia's legendary naturalist explorers, exploring the groundbreaking work of pioneers like Carl Linnaeus and polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen.

Day 7 - Final Day At Sea
Included: Our Week In Images Talk Unwind on your final day at sea, taking advantage of Oceania Nautica's world-class amenities and culinary offerings. Gather with fellow guests for "Our Week in Images," a celebratory showcase where Sarah will present guest photographs captured throughout the journey, concluding with a warm farewell from your hosts.

Day 8 - Disembark Oceania Nautica In Southampton, UK
Your Norwegian photography and wildlife cruise comes to an end today. After Oceania Nautica docks in Southampton, disembark after breakfast and make your journey home.

LIMITED SPACES
available, don't miss out!

Cabin/From	£pp
Inside	1999
Ocean View	2199
Veranda	2499
Concierge	2699
Penthouse	3699

Prices based on two people sharing.

Your *Exclusive* sanctuary at sea includes:

FREE house drinks package, including complimentary champagne, wine & beer during lunch and dinner and at select times across all bars & lounges ⇝ UNLIMITED Wi-Fi ⇝ ALL onboard gratuities ⇝ PLUS...

- 7-night adults-only cruise onboard Oceania Nautica
- Wildlife talks & tours by Jon Dunn (wildlife guide)
- Photography workshops onboard with Sarah Cuttle
- Free hosted shore tours in Stavanger & Rosendal
- Exclusive invite-only cocktail party
- Pick your own cabin!

cruise.co.uk
THE REAL CRUISE PEOPLE

TALK TO ONE OF OUR FRIENDLY CRUISE CONSULTANTS TODAY

0800 408 6205

TO GET THIS OFFER QUOTE CODE
TIMES-SPECIAL

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday: 9am - 9pm | Sunday: 10am - 8pm

SECURE
Fully protected ABTA & ATOL bonded

ESTABLISHED
We are the Real Cruise People - Cruise experts for over 40 years

PERSONAL
Deal with a dedicated Cruise.co.uk expert cruise consultant

ABTA The Travel Association 78024 | ATOL | IATA

All fares are per person and based on two adults sharing. All flights are based from London airports, regional airports may be available at a supplement. Excursion schedules, including location, dates and times, are subject to change based on availability.*Low Deposit & Interest-Free Payments is applicable to selected 2026, 2027 & 2028 sailings only, excluding World Cruises. Your monthly payment schedule will be advised by your Cruise Consultant. If you make any changes to your booking your monthly payments may increase. If you cancel your booking you will still be liable to pay the remainder of the full deposit amount. The full standard deposit amount is the minimum cancellation charge please see Cruise.co.uk for full terms & conditions. Some of our packages include elements that are natural occurrences, such as wildlife viewings. However, your viewing of such elements cannot be guaranteed and is subject to change based on weather conditions, climate change, and Wildlife sightings. This offer is not combinable with any other Cruise.co.uk offers, including the Explorer Fare. Cruise.co.uk reserves the right to amend or change the terms of this promotion without prior notice or announcement. Please see cruise.co.uk for full terms and conditions. Calls are recorded for marketing and training purposes. E&OE.

Travel Insurance for Over 50s

All ages, all conditions, all destinations^

EXTENDED SUMMER SALE 20% OFF* BASE PRICE

- ✓ Voted UK's No.1 for Customer Care[1]
- ✓ 24/7 English-speaking emergency helpline
- ✓ Trusted by millions for 25 years

Not all Travel Insurance is the same

Trustpilot Rated Excellent

defaqto ★★★★★ TravelInsurance 2018–2026 EXPERT RATED

AS SEEN ON TV

Call our UK Team 7 days a week FREE

0800 294 5133

AllClearTravel.co.uk

AllClear™

AllClear Gold, Gold Plus and Platinum achieved Which? Best Buy. AllClear Gold Plus and Platinum has been 5 Star rated by Defaqto. ^ We offered cover in 99.5%+ of cases (2025 quotes) but can't guarantee cover in every circumstance. [1] UK Broker Awards, Customer Service Award 2025. * Discount applies to base premiums only. Excludes premiuims for medical conditions and optional extras & is automatically applied. Cannot be used with any other offer. Offer ends at 23:59 on 28/09/26. For more information please refer to T&Cs at AllClearTravel.co.uk.

Over 50s Travel Insurance with no upper age limits

- ✓ 24/7 English speaking emergency helpline
- ✓ Unlimited medical cover available[1]
- ✓ Covered 27 million+ travellers
- ✓ Trusted for 25 years

EXTENDED SUMMER SALE 20% OFF* BASE PRICE

Trustpilot Rated Excellent

defaqto Travel Insurer of the Year 2026/27 WINNER

INSUREANDGO

Go without the doubt

Call our UK Call Centre FREE

0800 072 3632

InsureandGo.com

*InsureandGo Gold and Black achieved Which? Best Buy. [1] Unlimited emergency medical expenses available on Black policies. * Discount applies to the base premium only, does not apply to any premium generated to cover medical conditions or optional extras and is automatically applied. This discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offer ends at 23:59 on 28/09/26. See website T&Cs for more details.*

essential COSTA RICA

Colourful Costa Rica

See more **luxury hotels & tours** on our website

Natural Highlights fly drive 4*

Save £100

The world's most bio-diverse country. Explore Costa Rica's stunning Osa Peninsula & Corcovado National Park as well as the beaches and National Park in Manuel Antonio and other highlights.

11 nights fr £3,019pp
Flights, hotels, transfers & car hire

Costa Rica Adventure tour 4*

Save £150

Raft the thrilling Pacuare River, discover exotic birds in Los Quetzales National Park, snorkel in the Dominical region – as well as discovering Southern Costa Rica's final frontier, Corcovado National Park

14 nights fr £4,959pp
Flights, hotels & transfers

5 reasons to go there

- **Visit** majestic volcanoes, misty cloud forests and untouched beaches
- **Spot** sloths, monkeys, toucans, tree frogs and so much more!
- **Enjoy** white-water rafting and zip-lining
- **Meet** 'Ticos', the friendly, welcoming locals
- **Witness** Costa Rica's status as a leader in sustainable tourism and conservation

Discover Costa Rica fly drive 4*

Save £100

Great for first timers – discover all Costa Rica's highlights - Arenal Volcano National Park, Monteverde Cloud Forest, Tortuguero, the Caribbean Coast, and enjoy beach time at Guanacaste on the Pacific Coast.

14 nights fr £2,139pp
Flights, hotels & car hire

Costa Rica Jungle & Sea fly drive 4*

Save £200

Discover awesome beauty with this self-drive to cloud forests, volcanoes, glimmering waterfalls, coral reefs, Sarapiquí rainforest, Braulio Carrillo National Park, and the stunning Nicoya Peninsula.

11 nights fr £3,165pp
Flights, hotels & car hire

CLIENT TRUST ACCOUNT

ATOL Protected

ABTA ABTA No 76705

DialAFlight

Your travel. Personally crafted

020·7962·9933

The Times hotel guide
The Imperial
London WC1

VEERLE EVENS

The Edit lounge

One of the bedrooms

Rooms and suites 6/10
Food and drink 8/10
Where is it? 8/10
Overall score 7/10

Bloomsbury's the Imperial, one of seven hotels from the family-owned Imperial London Hotels, and found on Russell Square, has a bit of a past. The original hotel, dating from 1905 and designed by the architect behind the Titanic's dining room, charged 10/6 for room, bath and breakfast and was known for its gold-tiled Turkish bath and rooftop winter garden. The whole lot was demolished in the 1960s and the building that stands there now is a brutalist number by Charles Lovett Gill that went up in 1970.

The retro landmark has just reopened after a top-to-toe refurb that has given it a new roof terrace with far-reaching views to the Shard and St Paul's. Guests are greeted by a huge, glossy lobby with a marble desk complete with a sunken sink filled with bottles of Bordeaux crémant. The feel is celebratory and the enthusiastic staff are on board.

Rooms and suites

The Imperial is a big beast with 357 rooms, all of which come with super-king beds. Even the entry-level Bay rooms offer decent space, but go up to the Urban category and you get a sofa and minibar. There are interconnecting options for families and 16 accessible rooms. The style is corporate with a twist: lots of blond veneered wood, vast TVs and folksy headboards. Bathrooms have terrazzo-style showers, very plump towels and toiletries by Miller Harris. The mugs, by Surrey Ceramics, have a handmade feel and add a homely note. The suites, unusually, come with outdoor baths in a sort of open-sided cabin (so guests aren't overlooked). It's the Maldives by way of Russell Square.

Food and drink

It's all about Arcus rooftop bar and terrace, on the tenth floor, with those amazing views. It has a small plates sharing menu with nicely done chicken skewers, cheesy potato croquettes, roasted carrots and hunks of sourdough with a butter that changes each week. Cocktails are fancy — the Crescendo is a dessert-like cherry negroni that's dangerously moreish (from £17). Breakfast is also served here — a buffet plus hot food to order.

Downstairs, Edit bar and lounge serves an all-day menu of light bites and burgers and is decked out with tangerine-tiled walls and vintage theatre posters. The street-front Italian restaurant Bancone is yet to open and there's also the Bell Room and terrace, a private space for guests staying in premium rooms.

Jenny Coad was a guest of the Imperial, which has room-only doubles from £249; small plates from £6 (imperialhotels.co.uk)

What else is there?

A gym, an underground car park and a private dining room.

Where is it?

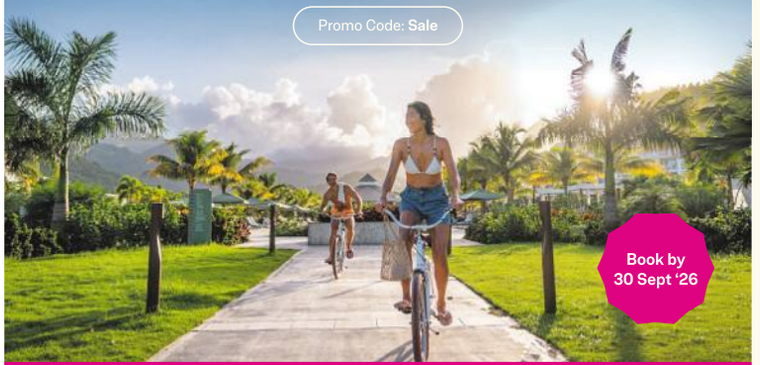
Less than five minutes' walk from the British Museum, a little more from the moving Foundling Museum overlooking Coram's Fields and less than 15 minutes' walk from the Sir John Soane's Museum. The restaurants of Lamb's Conduit Street are nearby and it's a 25-minute walk into Soho. King's Cross is about a 15-minute walk and Russell Square Tube is close by.

Jenny Coad

Sale Now On

Save up to £300 off per booking

Promo Code: Sale



Book by 30 Sept '26

Save £100 Spend £3,000 - £4,999 | Save £150 Spend £5,000 - £6,999 | Save £200 Spend £7,000 - £9,999 | Save £300 Spend £10,000 or more

Sandals

Call 0800 022 3443 Visit sandals.co.uk

THE TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 WINNER BEST ALL-INCLUSIVE HOTEL BRAND

ADVERTISED OFFERS PROVIDED BY unique caribbean holidays LTD. The UK's in-house Tour Operator for Sandals & Beaches Resorts

100% Financial Protection On Flight-Inclusive Package Holidays

ABTA Travel with confidence

Use promo code SALE to apply up to £300 off per booking. Valid for new bookings made between 27 August – 30 September 2026 with a minimum stay of 7 nights. Savings are per booking and vary according to the total booking value: Save £100 on bookings between £3,000 - £4,999. Save £150 on bookings between £5,000 - £6,999. Save £200 on bookings between £7,000 - £9,999. Save £300 on bookings of £10,000 or more. Please note: Promo code SALE cannot be used in conjunction with any other promo code at the time of booking. Prices are per person based on 2 adults sharing a room on an all-inclusive basis (all meals, drinks, selected land and water sports) and include return business class flights in British Airways' Club World Cabin from London (unless otherwise stated) and all applicable savings. Prices also include in-resort airport transfers (to and from Sandals resorts), tips and taxes. Prices are correct at time of submission/distribution, are subject to availability and can change or be withdrawn without notice. Unique Caribbean Holidays Ltd, registered office 2nd Floor Nucleus House, 2 Lower Mortlake Road, Richmond, England, TW9 2JA, acts as an agent for Sandals and Beaches Resorts Intl. All holidays are ABTA (Y6413) and ATOL (11174) protected. *Book by 29 September 2026 to secure British Airways' Airfares.

Fly Business Class, Stay in All-Inclusive Caribbean Luxury For Less

BRITISH AIRWAYS

Fly Business Class in British Airways' Club World Cabin and enjoy:

- Dedicated check-in and fast track security
- Exclusive lounge access
- A spacious seat which converts into a fully flat bed
- Delicious food and drink using fresh, local ingredients
- Luxury bedding and amenity kit
- 2x 32kg checked baggage allowance

Sandals Halcyon Beach, Saint Lucia

- Staying in a Crystal Lagoon Walkout Swim-up Club Level
- Travel on 1 June 2027
- Includes Return Business Class Flights in British Airways' Club World Cabin

7 Nights All-Inclusive from £3,669* PP

Club Level

INCLUDES £200 OFF WITH PROMO CODE SALE

Sandals Grande Antigua

- Staying in a Mediterranean Club Level Suite
- Travel on 7 June 2027
- Includes Return Business Class Flights in British Airways' Club World Cabin

7 Nights All-Inclusive from £3,815* PP

Club Level

INCLUDES £200 OFF WITH PROMO CODE SALE

Sandals Grenada

- Staying in a Lover's Lagoon Hideaway Walkout Junior Suite with Patio Tranquility Soaking Tub
- Travel on 1 June 2027
- Includes Return Business Class Flights in British Airways' Club World Cabin

7 Nights All-Inclusive from £4,335* PP

Club Level

INCLUDES £200 OFF WITH PROMO CODE SALE

FESTIVE SOLO HOLIDAYS

ONE TRAVELLER

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS FOR MATURE SOLO TRAVELLERS

Prices from £1,350

- ✔ Solo travel specialist for the over 55s
- ✔ Never left on your own unless you so choose
- ✔ Fully escorted by a dedicated Tour Manager
- ✔ Double rooms for sole occupancy in quality hotels
- ✔ All flights, transportation & excursions included
- ✔ Most meals, drinks and many extras included

Request your holiday brochure today!

DECEMBER 2025 Which? Recommended Provider SOLO HOLIDAYS

ABTA Travel with confidence | ATOL Protected

Fully Bonded | Fully Protected

☎ 01760 722 011 🖱 onetraveller.co.uk

EXPERIENCE THE "REAL" FLORIDA MAGIC

Nestled between Orlando and Tampa, Polk County trades hectic theme park crowds for a relaxed, authentic escape. It's a region built for exploring, where wildlife safaris and historic orange groves meet the spectacular singing tower of Bok Tower Gardens. Culture seekers can marvel at the world's largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright architecture, while foodies can feast in the official "BBQ Capital of Florida." From Westgate River Ranch rodeos to the retro charm of the Chain of Lakes, call us to plan your ultimate tailor-made Florida adventure.

America *as you like it*

020 8742 8299

americaasyoulikeit.com

TIMES Travel *Partner*

17 DAYS FROM **£3,990*** per person

Exclusive free pre-night for The Times readers

Plus save up to £400 per person^

Wonders of Indonesia

September 2026 to October 2028

An incredible introduction to Indonesia, this journey immerses you in the rich cultures and spectacular landscapes of this diverse archipelago. On the island of Java, explore cultural hub Yogyakarta and admire the mighty Borobudur. Experience traditional village life in Candirejo and witness sunrise over Mount Bromo before flying to Flores to search for Komodo dragons among the volcanic scenery of Komodo National Park. End the adventure on the beaches of Bali.

*Prices listed are based on two sharing a twin/double room. Single supplement on request. Flights on holidays booked more than 11 months in advance may be subject to supplements when airline fares are published. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Wendy Wu, ABTA W7994 ATOL 6639, a company wholly independent of News UK. ^The offer is subject to availability and Wendy Wu Tours reserve the right to change or withdraw the offer. ^Offer discount already applied, book by September 14, 2026.

Our trusted partner Wendy Wu Tours | ABTA Travel with confidence

Price includes

- International flights and current taxes
- 14 nights in three plus/ four-star accommodation
- 14 breakfasts, 12 lunches and ten dinners
- Touring with guides and entrance fees
- Free pre-tour extension with hotel, breakfast and private transfers available on any Wendy Wu tour - exclusively for The Times readers

Itinerary

Jakarta – Semarang – Yogyakarta –Bromo – Malang – Labuan – Bajo – Bali

CALL TODAY ON

0808 304 2408

thetimes.com/ww-indonesia

QUOTE TIMES-ON

Intriguing India

See more amazing **tours and hotels** on our website

The Golden Triangle 5*

Save £200

If you have never been to India then this wonderful **Golden Triangle** tour is the perfect introduction. Highlights include the iconic **Taj Mahal**, the **Amber Fort**, **Delhi**, the abandoned city of **Fatehpur Sikri** and **Jaipur**, the 'Pink City'.

Flights, hotels & transfers - 6 nts fr £**3,059**pp

Hills of East India tour 4*

Save £100

A magical private tour that will take you to historic monuments, ancient monasteries, bustling cities, pretty villages and lush tea plantations. The spectacular scenery with the changing colour of the Himalayan Range at sunrise as a particular highlight.

Flights, hotels & transfers - 9 nts fr £**2,239**pp

5 reasons to go there

- **Discover** historic sites, remote villages exotic wildlife and national parks
- **Visit** colourful, bustling markets
- **Feast** on delicious Indian cuisine
- **Experience** a melting pot of different cultures and religions
- **Explore** impressive iconic sites such as the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort

Tiger Trails tour 5*

Save £350

Be on the lookout for tigers, leopards and monkeys as you tour around **Madhya Pradesh**, the king of the jungle for tiger parks. Draw your time to a close with an evening safari in **Bandhavgarh** and a day of leisure in bustling **Delhi**.

Flights, hotels & transfers - 9 nts fr £**4,879**pp

Islands of Andaman tour 4*

Save 15%

For beautiful coastlines, Time Magazine's 'Best Beach in Asia', fantastic dive spots and that away-from-it-all feeling, there's nowhere better than the alluring Andaman Islands - which you'll experience staying in 5* Taj Exotica Resorts.

Flights, hotels & transfers - 7 nts fr £**2,859**pp

CLIENT TRUST ACCOUNT

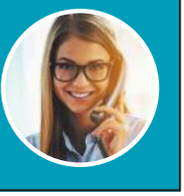
ATOL Protected

ABTA ABTA No 76705

DialAFlight

Your travel. Personally crafted

020·7962·9933



Travel doctor Solving your holiday dilemmas

Julia Brookes
Consumer expert

Q My husband and I will be celebrating our 30th wedding anniversary next June and would love to mark it with a special holiday. Our budget is about £6,000 and we're thinking of a posh version of interrailing, travelling by train through Europe with Italy a must-visit. We'd love advice on the most spectacular route but don't want to spend the whole time travelling. A few days somewhere luxurious, with plenty to see and do alongside some relaxation, would be perfect. We thought we'd set off around June 20 when hopefully it will be less hot and crowded. What can you suggest?
Carole Mackie

A This is a splendid idea, although you should expect heat and crowds in Italy because the end of June is very much peak season. To make the experience hassle-free I'd recommend booking a package with a specialist no-fly operator such as Byway, which means you'll have financial protection as well as 24/7 support en route in case of cancellation or strikes. Its ten-night Better than the Bernina Express trip is suitably spectacular and could be tweaked to add an additional Italian stop as well as hotel upgrades. You'd travel to Switzerland via Paris, Milan and Lecco, one of the less touristy towns on Lake Como, where you might want to extend the scheduled two-night stay to enjoy leisurely waterside lunches and boat trips. The real showstopper, though, is the railway journey using local trains from Tirano to St Moritz. Following the Bernina route, it climbs through gorgeous Alpine scenery, while the Albula line takes you across the extraordinary six-arched Landwasser Viaduct. It starts at £2,200pp in late June, including B&B and transport (byway.travel).

ALAMY

Bellagio, Lake Como, Italy. Below: the harbour in Helsinki, Finland

Q My husband and I are going to Helsinki in November for a long weekend to see an ice hockey game. We know it's not a great time of year to visit but what else can we do while we are there?
Carl Dixon

A Helsinki in November is dark, chilly and quite probably wet or snowy. But that makes it brilliant for saunas, cosy cafés, museums and diving into its excellent food scene. For the sauna, Loyly Helsinki is an architectural beauty with a seaside setting and Baltic views. There are two-hour time slots and steps into the sea for a quick dip if you're feeling brave (£25pp; loylyhelsinki.fi). Café Regatta, a cute red waterfront cottage near the Sibelius monument, is perfect for coffee and cinnamon buns, as well as grilling sausages on its fire pit (caferegatta.fi); the Old Market Hall is the place for local specialities like reindeer salami (vanhakauppahalli.fi); and "plant-forward" two-Michelin-starred Gron is a treat (tasting menu £166; restaurantgron.com). If you love Tove Jansson, the exhibition *Escape to Moominvalley* runs until January at the Architecture and Design Museum (£20; admuseo.fi). Embrace the short days and cold weather and you should have a wonderful weekend.

Q On May 28 I booked two premium economy seats on a Virgin Atlantic flight from Heathrow to Miami for early September using a Mastercard reward voucher and points. I chose this flight as it departed at 3.50pm, which gave us time to drive to the airport from our home in Devon. On August 8 I received a text and email informing me the flight had been cancelled and we'd been moved to a 10.55am departure, meaning we either have to stay at the airport overnight or leave home at stupid o'clock. I contacted Virgin and all it could tell me was that my original flight had been cancelled for operational reasons. As I'd been given 25 days' notice I wasn't entitled to compensation for out of pocket expenses. But I used 141,000 points for these flights and this earlier flight would only be 95,000 points. When I asked if the difference would be refunded I was told that as Virgin had made the change it would not and my only recourse would be to cancel my original booking and rebook. I won't be doing that due to its £70pp cancellation charge. I accept these things happen but I've had to change parking, hotel and lounge bookings and I am paying over the odds with points. Is this fair?
Marty Burnham

A Given this problem was entirely Virgin's making, its response seemed rather churlish. After I got involved it apologised and agreed to pay for the hotel stay before the flight. While you are still annoyed about the points, you're glad you won't now be out of pocket.

Q I recently returned from a holiday in Spain. On the way out, my biometrics were taken as part of the EU entry-exit system with no problems. But ten days after my return, I've only just realised that my passport wasn't stamped so I've got no proof I've actually returned, nor how long I stayed for. What should I do?
Jonathan Hunter

A Don't panic. If you were travelling to Spain on a British passport as a normal tourist, you may not get a passport stamp; the new EU entry-exit system is designed to replace these with electronic records. You can check your comings and goings using the EU's handy online tool at travel-europe.europa.eu.

Contact us

If you have a gripe, suggestion or question relating to your holidays, please email traveldoctor@thetimes.co.uk

Don't put up with this

Car-hire firm left us stranded by road

My wife and I hired a car at Barcelona airport at the end of June through Enterprise. An hour into the journey, the fan belt broke and the car was eventually collected by a transporter. We called Enterprise and were told categorically we couldn't travel on the transporter, it wouldn't arrange a replacement car and there was nothing it could do to help. We managed to get a taxi to our destination, then hired a car locally and took a taxi to the airport. What seems astonishing is that Enterprise refused to help, felt no responsibility for the car we hired from them and felt no duty of care towards us. We feel we're owed the original cost of the car hire, the deposit, the £43 worth of petrol we put in the car and the £283 we spent on taxis. We've now phoned Enterprise support three times. Each time it promises to respond within five days but we've heard nothing after six weeks. Can you help?
Tim Stainton

This was jaw-droppingly poor customer service. Even after Enterprise agreed you were entitled to a refund, it initially told me you'd rejected assistance after the breakdown. However, it has now accepted you were left stranded. A spokesperson said: "We are deeply sorry for the inconvenience and distress caused to the customer. We conducted a full investigation and found that a breakdown in communication between our teams meant the customer's concerns were not escalated as they should have been. We have spoken directly to the customer to apologise and have reimbursed the full rental cost, as well as other additional expenses."

Explore. Plan. And now book with The Times.

Call 0808 231 5090 or visit thetimes.com/holidays

TIMES Holidays

THE TOP PARTNER FOR HX EXPEDITIONS

LIMITED STATEROOMS AT THESE EXCLUSIVE FARES

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE BESTSELLING 2027 ALL-INCLUSIVE

ELEMENTAL ICELAND

9 NIGHTS DEPARTING 17TH & 24TH MAY 2027 ON BOARD *MS FRIDTJOF NANSEN*

SCAN FOR FULL ITINERARY & MORE DETAILS

EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS OF UP TO £2,000±

FREE TWO NIGHT PRE-CRUISE 4★ HOTEL STAY IN REYKJAVIK, ICELAND‡

ALL-INCLUSIVE DRINKS, WI-FI & GRATUITIES INCLUDED++

EXPEDITION LANDINGS & ACTIVITIES ON BOARD INCLUDED×

RETURN FLIGHTS & OVERSEAS TRANSFERS INCLUDED

BOOK BY 8PM 18TH SEPTEMBER 2026 TO RECEIVE A FREE CASE OF SIX FINE WINES+

YOUR INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

Shaped by lava below and ice above, Iceland is a country of contrasts. Here, tumbling glaciers meet sparkling fjords surrounded by towering volcanoes and smoking hills. Four fifths of the land is uninhabited and wildlife takes the lead, with around 23 whale species in the surrounding waters, joined by dolphins, seals and a multitude of seabirds.

Seljalandsfoss

Guided by the HX Expedition Team, you'll visit culture-rich cities and traditional fishing villages, spend long days in forests and geothermal pools and perhaps even cross the Arctic Circle.

Iceland is a magical place and will take your breath away, and when you book with ROL Cruise you will get an array of **EXCLUSIVE** benefits!

★INCLUDED EXCURSION×: Dynjandi Waterfall breathtaking beauty
Enjoy a scenic drive through the Westfjords with your local guide, passing remote villages, soaring mountains and deep, breathtaking fjords. A 15-minute hike brings you to the base of Dynjandi. You'll be moved by the majesty of this beautiful waterfall which roars down the mountain.

YOUR EXCLUSIVE ROL CRUISE FARES

CABIN	GRADE	ROL CRUISE FARE (PP)
Polar Outside	RR	£4,499
Arctic Superior with Balcony	XT	£5,899
Expedition Suite with Balcony	ME	£6,899
Expedition Corner Suite with Balcony	MB	£8,699

SOLO FARES are available from **£6,399**
Fares and availability are based on 17th May 2027 departure

SECURE YOUR CABIN WITH A DEPOSIT

Locally payable taxes/fees of approximately £9.77 will apply based on current rates

EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES® - worth up to **£173** off your next booking with ROL Cruise††

rolcruise.co.uk/times
TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON **0808 239 5405**
QUOTE OFFER REF **644931**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM – 8PM

Trustpilot ★★★★★

Platinum Trusted Service Award feefo

Fares are based on two adults sharing, except single cabins, and may increase or be withdrawn at any time. Fares and availability correct at time of sign off 09/09/2026. ±Savings are based on two adults sharing. ×Some tours may be at a supplement and are subject to change. Flight schedules are subject to change and may be indirect. Final timings are confirmed closer to departure. An extra hotel night may be required. ++Subject to the cruise line's T&Cs. ‡Star ratings are ROL Cruise classified. +Gift is based on one per booking, for UK mainland addresses only.††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. For full ROL Cruise T&Cs visit www.rolcruise.co.uk. E&OE.

THE TOP PARTNER FOR CUNARD

OFFER EXTENDED DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND - FARES ARE INCREASING

ROL CRUISE 30 TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE NO-FLY MAIDEN
South America Circumnavigation Sale

SAVE UP TO 25%± ONLY WITH ROL CRUISE

FULL BOARD LUXURY CRUISING FROM ONLY £89PP PER NIGHT

COMPLIMENTARY ON BOARD SPEND OF UP TO $2,500*

COMPLIMENTARY GRATUITIES WORTH UP TO $3,116++

YOUR 82 NIGHTS SOUTH AMERICA CIRCUMNAVIGATION DEPARTING 10TH JANUARY 2027 ON BOARD *QUEEN ANNE*

4 OVERNIGHT STAYS	23 PORTS VISITED
13 COUNTRIES EXPLORED	TRANSIT THE PANAMA CANAL

Embark on an extraordinary 82-night journey on board Cunard's *Queen Anne*, tracing the vibrant contours of South America in unmatched style. From the golden beaches of Brazil to the glacial majesty of the Chilean fjords, this circumnavigation captures a continent's soul – its rhythm, colour, and contrasts. Sail past legendary Cape Horn, linger overnight in iconic cities like Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, and explore hidden ports where adventure meets elegance.

On board, indulge in Cunard's signature White Star Service, world-class dining, and the timeless grandeur of *Queen Anne* – a ship designed for modern luxury and quiet discovery. This is more than a cruise; it's a once-in-a-lifetime odyssey through history, nature, and culture – an unforgettable circumnavigation of wonder.

Not only is this an unforgettable experience to circumnavigate South America, when you book with ROL Cruise, you receive EXCLUSIVE benefits.

SCAN FOR FULL ITINERARY AND DETAILS

WHAT'S INCLUDED

BOOK WITH THE TOP PARTNER FOR CUNARD TO RECEIVE:

- SAVINGS OF UP TO 25%± - ONLY WITH ROL CRUISE FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

- EXCLUSIVE FREE Oceanview to Balcony upgrade^

EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES® worth up to **£953** off your next booking††

- **82 nights** full-board luxury cruising on the newest ship in the iconic Cunard fleet, *Queen Anne* including++:
  - **COMPLIMENTARY** on board spend of up to **$2,500** for all bookings*
  - **COMPLIMENTARY GRATUITIES** worth up to **$3,116**
  - White Star fine dining, bars and lounges
  - Upgrade to all-inclusive drinks, Wi-Fi & more, please call for details

YOUR EXCLUSIVE ROL CRUISE FARES

STATEROOM/SUITE	GRADE	FULL FARE (PP)	SALE FARE (PP)
Inside	IF	~~£9,999~~	£7,299
Oceanview (1 left)	EB	~~£12,899~~	£11,259
Oceanview	EA	~~£13,299~~	£11,969
*EXCLUSIVE FREE UPGRADE to a Balcony (CB†)^*			
Club Balcony	A2	~~£19,999~~	£17,999
PRINCESS & QUEENS GRILL			
Princess Grill Suite	P2	~~£29,999~~	£24,299
Penthouse Suite (1 left)	Q3	~~£52,999~~	£47,699

Solo fares are available on request

rolcruise.co.uk/times
TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE ABTA ABTA No P9255

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON **0808 239 5887**
QUOTE OFFER REF **644930**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM – 8PM

Trustpilot

Platinum Trusted Service Award feefo

Pricing and availability correct at time of sign off (09/09/2026). Offer applies to new bookings only. Fares may be increased or withdrawn at anytime. ^Subject to availability. ±Based on two adults sharing. ++Subject to the cruise line's T&Cs. †Denotes obstructed view. *Based on two adults sharing. ††Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. Cunard T&Cs apply. E&OE

THE TIMES

Saturday September 12 2026

saturday review

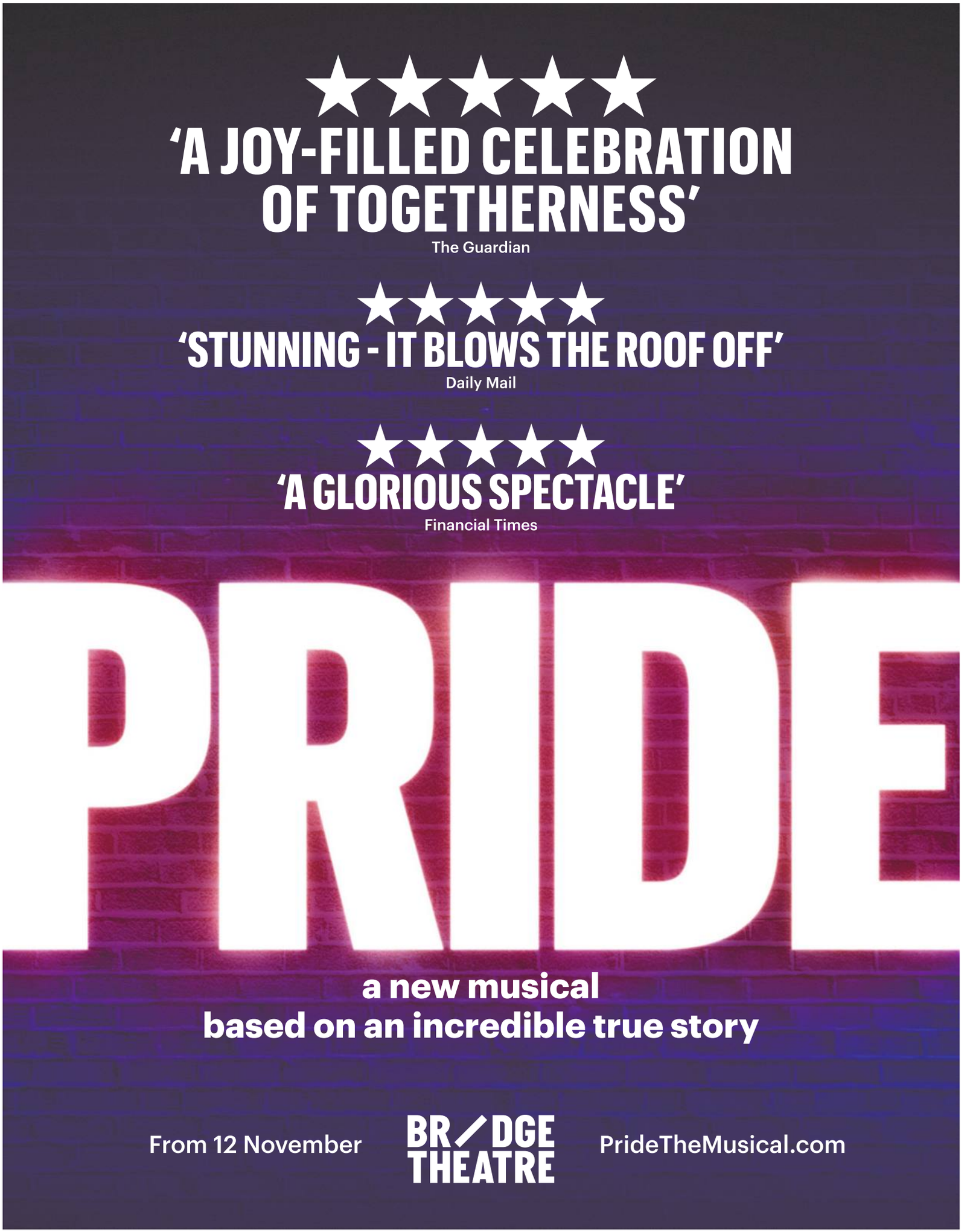
Inside Your 7-day guide to TV, radio and films

A grand affair
Andrew Davies on his explosive memoir

‘I’m a people pleaser’

Rob Brydon on his new sitcom and life after Uncle Bryn

art | books | theatre | film | music | television | what’s on | puzzles


★★★★★
'A JOY-FILLED CELEBRATION OF TOGETHERNESS'
The Guardian
★★★★★
'STUNNING - IT BLOWS THE ROOF OFF'
Daily Mail
★★★★★
'A GLORIOUS SPECTACLE'
Financial Times
PRIDE
a new musical
based on an incredible true story
From 12 November
BRIDGE THEATRE
PrideTheMusical.com

What to do this week by our critics

My hot ticket

Richard Morrison
chief classical music critic

Last Night of the Proms

The 2026 BBC Proms season concludes with the traditional singalong preceded by... well, few would have predicted a Dolly Parton medley, but with the queen of country's demise, Sheridan Smith has been drafted in to sing *9 to 5* and Beverley Knight *I Will Always Love You*. Classical fans must be content with Yuja Wang, performing Barber's Piano Concerto, and the Scottish tenor Nicky Spence's *Rule, Britannia!* — kilt and sporran expected.
Royal Albert Hall, London, tonight; live on BBC2 (first half), BBC1 (second half) and Radio 3

IAN DOUGLAS

Yuja Wang. Below: Ricky Gervais

Theatre

Twenty Thousand Streets Under the Sky

Clive Davis

If you saw Troupe Theatre Company's magnificent two-part adaptation of that dynastic epic *The Forsyte Saga*, you'll know why expectations are running high for the team's latest venture. Patrick Hamilton's trilogy of novels, centred on a London pub, offers a captivating glimpse of British life between the wars, ordinary punters mingling with dreamers and the young women who earn a living from selling their bodies in the West End.
Southwark Playhouse, London, to Oct 17

Visual art

Open House Festival

Laura Freeman

As anyone who grew up watching *Through the Keyhole* or *MTV Cribs* knows, there's a particular nosy pleasure to be had in seeing behind closed doors. The Open House Festival is the capital's annual unlocking, with over 600 sites and walking tours. Visit the exquisite Hindu Temple at Neasden (just off the North Circular and you would never know it was there), see the views from Erno Goldfinger's Trellick Tower and board a narrowboat in Kingsland Basin.
Venues across London, to Sep 20

Pop

The Waterboys

Will Hodgkinson

Inspired by the *Rolling Thunder Revue*, Bob Dylan's 1975 tour, which featured a circus-like revolving door of guest stars, Mike Scott's Scottish-Irish band is reviving their 1988 rootsy masterpiece *Fisherman's Blues*, albeit in a much altered form. Album favourites like the Waterboys' reimagining of the Yeats poem *The Stolen Child* will surely feature alongside ones beyond it like the peerless *The Whole of the Moon* — once covered by Prince, surprisingly. The outlaw country hero Steve Earle is confirmed as support and as one of the guests; more are bound to turn up on a night Scott promises will capture *Fisherman's Blues*' ragged spirit rather than faithfully reproduce it.
The O2, London, tonight, and touring

Dance

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Debra Craine

The powerhouse of American modern dance brings two programmes to London. In the first the New York-based troupe showcases new choreography, while the second celebrates Ailey's remarkable legacy. Closing both evenings is his masterpiece *Revelations*, a barnstorming ode to joy and salvation that evokes the African-American experience of his 1930s Texas childhood.
Sadler's Wells, London, Tue to Sep 19

Comedy

Ricky Gervais

Alice Jones

"Whatever you think of this joke, remember — I did *The Office*." So says Ricky Gervais after a particularly bracing punchline on his new tour, *Legend*. So, yes, the 65-year-old will do jokes about the Holocaust, race and paedophilia, and not all will land, but there's no one who can play with a room's preconceptions like him.
Alban Arena, St Albans, Mon & Tue, then touring to Dec 10

Film

Pressure

Kevin Maher

British weather chat gets the prestige movie treatment with this drama about high-stakes meteorological predictions in the days before the Normandy landings. Damian Lewis is a trigger-happy Monty while Brendan Fraser is a more cautious Ike. Enter the fact-focused James Stagg (Andrew Scott), who predicts an unlikely storm on the scheduled date. Conflict ensues, as does quality drama.

What we learnt

What made Trump?

Anthony Scaramucci, Trump's former spokesman, believes America made "three catastrophic decisions" in the 1990s. First, Clinton embraced free trade with China on terms that hurt US industry. Second, Bush Jr went to war without raising taxes, increasing the deficit. And third, Obama bailed out Wall Street. All of these choices, argues "the Mooch", created the populist mood that Trump has been able to harness. *Page 13*

Oh yes he Khan

Was Genghis Khan extraordinary — or just lucky with the weather? The Mongol leader was a beneficiary of a few unusually wet decades on the Mongolian steppe, which meant more grass, horses, livestock and cavalrymen. In a different climate he might have been merely another run-of-the-mill marauder. *Page 15*

PARK PROMOTIONS LTD PROUDLY PRESENTS

GILBERT O'SULLIVAN

CELEBRATING 60 years OF MUSIC

Featuring songs from the new album *On The Record* alongside classics such as *Alone Again (Naturally)*, *Clair*, *Get Down*, *Nothing Rhymed* and many more...

AUTUMN UK TOUR 2026

21.09 LANCASTER Grand Theatre
22.09 YORK Grand Opera House
24.09 EDINBURGH The Queen's Hall
27.09 BRADFORD St George's Hall
28.09 BUXTON Opera House
30.09 LOUGHBOROUGH Town Hall
01.10 DONCASTER Cast
03.10 FELIXSTOWE Spa Pavilion
04.10 BURY ST EDMUNDS The Apex
06.10 WORTHING Pavilion Theatre
07.10 BRISTOL St George's
12.10 LIVERPOOL Philharmonic Hall
14.10 LEAMINGTON Royal Spa Centre
29.10 BILLINGHAM Forum Theatre
30.10 HARROGATE Harrogate Theatre
04.11 PORTSMOUTH Theatre Royal
06.11 SAFFRON WALDEN Saffron Hall
08.11 LONDON London Palladium

On The Record is the new album by Gilbert O'Sullivan

Available to buy on tour and general release from Friday 6th November on CD, Vinyl, Digital album and streaming

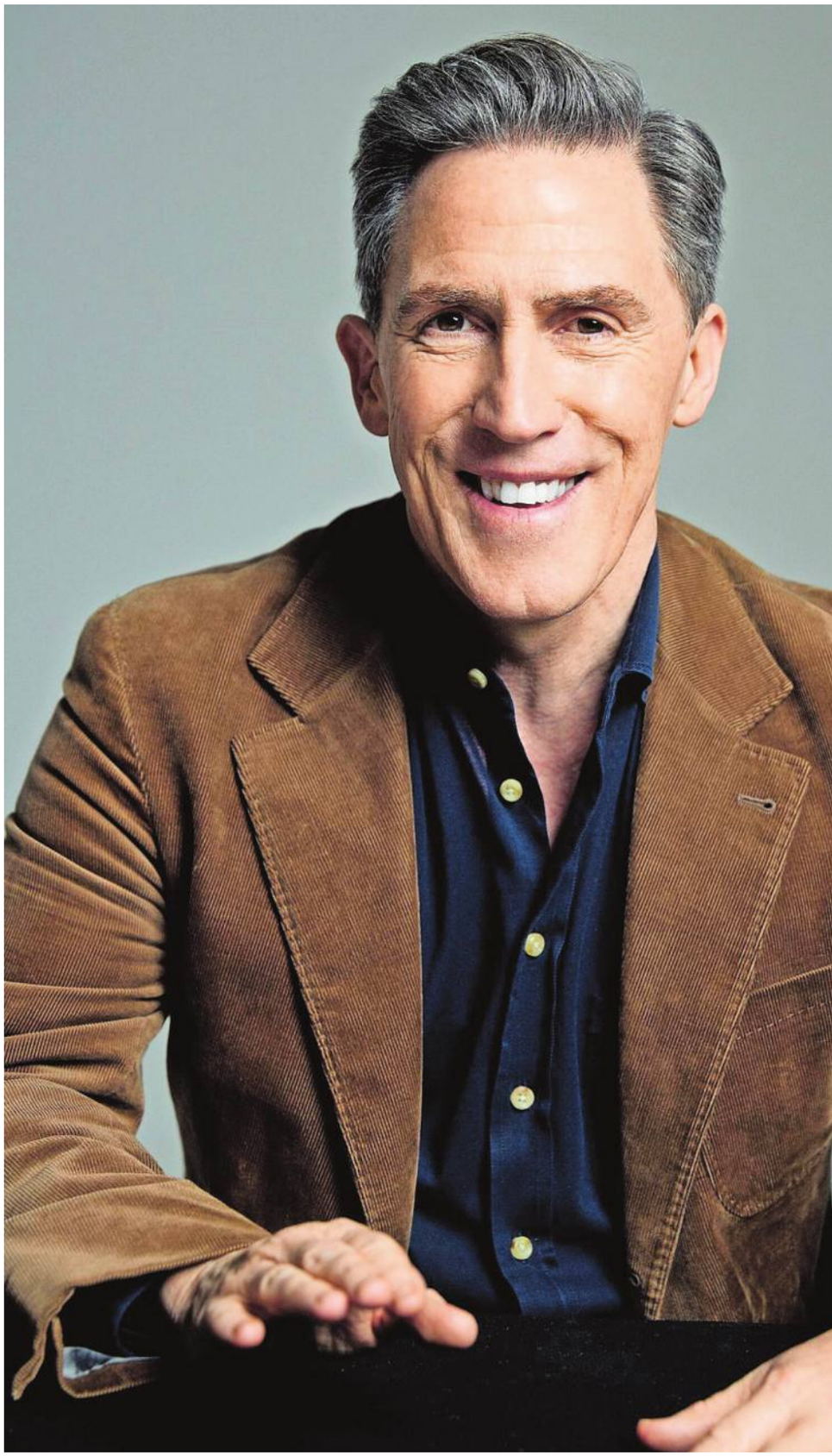
gilbertosullivan.co.uk

Inside today Your 7-day guide to TV and radio **Pages 19-43**

cover story

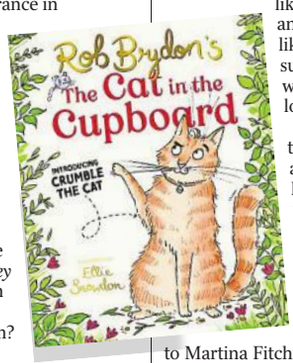
‘I have no desire to be number one

Rob Brydon isn’t slowing down in his sixties. He tells Alice Jones about his new sitcom and children’s book — and the return of The Trip



Rob Brydon — in chinos, navy knit T-shirt and bare feet — is telling me about a recent trip he took to Hay-on-Wye. As usual he was approached by fans wanting to say hello; as usual most of them wanted to ask him about perhaps his best-loved character, the chirpy fusspot Uncle Bryn in *Gavin & Stacey*. “It doesn’t bother me. I pretty much know what they’re going to say. And I’m going to say, ‘Oh, thanks very much. No, I don’t think there will be any more. Sorry, no, I can’t tell you what happened on the fishing trip.’ But this one man came up to me and said, ‘So, how are things since *Gavin & Stacey* finished?’” Brydon’s eyebrows shoot up into his quiff, his mouth hangs open — a cartoon of baffled dismay. “The implication being, are you doing OK? Are you on your uppers? You don’t want to stand there proving yourself, saying, ‘Well, I’ve done this and this and this...’”

It’s true that Brydon has not exactly gone gentle into that good night after *Gavin & Stacey* was laid to rest at Christmas two years ago. Last year, alongside his regular gig hosting the panel show *Would I Lie to You?* on primetime BBC, he fronted a new quiz show (*The Floor*), a new reality show (*Destination X*) and a three-part documentary about country music (*Rob Brydon’s Honky Tonk Road Trip*), made his annual voice appearance in the Christmas Julia Donaldson animation (Reginald Rake in *The Scarecrows’ Wedding*) and toured the country with an eight-piece band for his live stage show. Not to mention the inevitable podcast.



Still, does he miss Uncle Bryn a little bit? “Not really, no.” Was he sad when *Gavin & Stacey* ended, after 17 years, on and off, of being the nation’s favourite sitcom? “Not in the way you might think I would be sad. No, not really. It doesn’t work like that.”

Brydon turned 60 last year and with that, he says, something shifted. He got into jazz and vintage cars for the first time, applied himself to fitness, and started taking saunas and cold-plunging in a pool in his back garden. As for work: “New things became appealing. I’ve said yes to more, but I’ve also been offered more. It’s been a curious time.” Is he hitting his peak? “Maybe. I don’t know. I’m not eaten up inside with the desire to play Hamlet or King Lear. I’m so lucky, I get offered things and I genuinely enjoy doing them.”

So this year, while there is a new BBC sitcom, *Bill’s Included*, and the next instalment of his peerless travel comedy with Steve Coogan, *The Trip to the Northern Lights*, to come in the autumn, he will also appear in *Jesus Christ Superstar* in the West End, playing King Herod. He is part of a rotating cast of guest stars, including Reece Shearsmith, Michael Ball and Simon Russell Beale, who will each do a week — “My kind of run, perfect.” And he has written his first children’s book, *The Cat in the Cupboard*, which is published this week and is the reason we meet today, at a café below his publicists’ office in west London, while he scarfs down a cheese and ham toastie.

“I resisted it because it did strike me as a little bit of a cliché that someone like me would do something like that,” he says. “I had been asked and I had said no.” *The Cat in the Cupboard* is inspired by his own cat, Crumble (good name), a magnificent 13-year-old ginger tom who, after the Brydon home in Teddington, west London, got a new glass-walled extension, had to enter the house through a catflap in a kitchen cupboard. “And one day I just said the words to myself, ‘the cat in the cupboard’. I’ve always liked rhyme, so just for my own pleasure I came up with, ‘The cat in the cupboard is often discovered on top of an old pile of clothes.’” He wrote it down and thought nothing more of it until last year, when he thought why not, and wrote more, all in that same singsong rhythm that sounds so pleasing in his Glamorgan lilt.

The handsome illustrations by Ellie Snowdon feature a cat that looks just like the real Crumble and an owner who looks just like Brydon. “I’m surprised by how pleased with it I am,” he says, looking thrilled.

It’s tempting to ascribe this latest venture to another shift in Brydon’s life. He has been in the trenches of parenthood for a long time, but now his children are almost all grown-up. He has five, ranging in age from 31 to 15 — three from his first marriage to Martina Fitchie, two from his second to Claire Holland, a former producer on *The South Bank Show*. The older three are a “casting director, chef and primary school teacher”, he says proudly. And of the younger “batch”, as he calls them, Tom has just done his A-levels and George sits his GCSEs next year.

The book isn’t for them, then, but they certainly inspired it. “I know from my own children over the years the difference between what I would consider to be a good book — Roald Dahl, Julia Donaldson, Shirley Hughes, they roll off the tongue — and then you come to another book and it’s like wading through treacle.” Did he do all the voices when he read to his children? “Yeah, I would, but often the kids don’t like it. I felt like saying, ‘This is one of the few things I can do! I have a limited

— I just like being in the game'

COVER: CHARLIE CLIFT/CAMERA PRESS. BELOW: SOPHIA SPRING/BBC; PHIL FISK, TOM JACKSON/BBC;

Above: Rob Brydon with Steve Coogan in The Trip to the Northern Lights; and with Larry Lamb, Alison Steadman, James Corden and Robert Wilfort in Gavin & Stacey. Right: with the cast of Bill's Included. Below: with his wife, Clare Holland

'Steve's impressions are more accurate, he has an amazing ability, but they are joyless'

skill set: I can't help you with your maths homework, your history, your geography. What I can tell you is how to stand on stage, don't speak too fast, look people in the eye. And I can do voices.' And they would go, 'Do your own voice, Dad.'"

His family, he thinks, are one reason why he has kept his head over 26 years in showbusiness. "I have no desire to be No 1. I just like being in the game, basically — somewhere up near the top. And I've always thought it's because I've got so many children that I've got plenty to occupy me. And the work, to some degree, is a bit of an escape from the responsibilities of parenthood."

The other reason is that he came to fame late. Rob Brydon Jones grew up in Baglan, Glamorgan — the son of Howard, a car dealer, and Joy, a teacher. He has two younger brothers, Peter — who became an indie musician who was close to Amy Winehouse and Pete Doherty — and Jeremy, who died of sudden infant death syndrome as a baby when Brydon was six years old. At school in Porthcawl he appeared in plays with Ruth Jones (co-creator of *Gavin & Stacey*), who would later give him the part of a lifetime in Bryn. Brydon was, she wrote in her 2025 book *When Gavin Met Stacey*, "obviously our first choice".

Brydon got a place at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, but left when he got a job on Radio Wales, "playing Chris de Burgh, doing travel reports". A presenting gig on the Home Shopping Network and numerous lucrative voiceovers followed, but he wanted to write. So, aged 35, he made a tape of himself playing a divorcee called Keith Barret, paid to have it professionally edited using his voiceover money and sent it to Steve Coogan's production company Baby Cow. It became *Marion & Geoff*, a one-man marvel in which Brydon plays Keith, a minicab driver coming to terms with his wife leaving him while living in a student flat-share.

So his new sitcom, *Bill's Included*, also made by Baby Cow for the BBC, is a bit of a full-circle moment. Brydon plays Bill Beam: after his wife leaves him for their landscape gardener, he opens up his house to students from the local university. "Don't think of me as a landlord," he tells them. "I'm a landfriend." Cue comic generational clashes over oat milk, landlines and the rules of dating.

There are echoes of Uncle Bryn in Bill, who welcomes his new housemates by playing them George Michael's *Faith* on the piano, tells off-colour jokes and fusses over the fridge door, but the ghost of Keith is there too. If you had to name Brydon's speciality perhaps it would be this — a sunny, kindly demeanour masking some deeply buried unspoken pain. Even Bryn had his depths.

It was Coogan who pushed him to make the new sitcom, to return to his roots and the likes of *Human Remains*, the bleakly funny anthology of unhappy couples he made with Julia Davis at the start of his career. "'Why are you not doing any character comedy? You should be doing character comedy,'" Brydon says, sliding effortlessly into Coogan's Mancunian drawl. "Which I was quite keen to do, because you want to remind people that you don't just host game shows."

At first he played Bill with a Brummie accent and a wig. "But I just looked so creepy." So he went back to his own voice, found a wholesome new touchstone (Richard Briers in *Ever Decreasing Circles* and *The Good Life*), and new writers, in Ben Ashenden and Alex Owen, also known as the sketch duo the Pin, and took out all the swearing.

"My thing with that is always, what are we gaining with somebody saying f***? I'll tell you what we lose. We lose a whole swathe of viewers who can't watch it now. I'm not prudish. In its place, great. But for a show like this, no."

He loves the finished show but found the shoot exhausting. "It was bloody knackering because you're in virtually every scene." It's why he says he wouldn't do *The Celebrity Traitors* — he wouldn't be able to cope with the lack of sleep. "I've just got no interest in it. Why would I? To what end?" It looks quite fun and millions of people watch it, I say. "I have enough fun in my life already. I don't need another thing."

Happily, he did say yes to a fifth outing of *The Trip*, although the fourth series, in 2020 — set in Greece — had been billed as a final fling. This time, he and Coogan, playing "Rob" and "Steve", visit Scandinavia, and on the evidence of the episodes I've seen it might be the best yet, as the pair are forced into recording a daily podcast about their travels (Rob wants to discuss Abba, Steve, Ingmar Bergman), reflect on love in their sixties and face up to mortality. It still shears pleasingly close to real life, but with one significant difference. "I don't think Steve and I have ever sat down for a meal and done impressions. And then competed as to who was better." But, if you had to say... who is better? "Steve's are more accurate, but they are joyless. His are photographs and mine are paintings. Steve has this amazing ability, but I don't think he enjoys performance just for the sake of it. I do. He is not a people-pleaser, I am a people-pleaser."

In the first episode there is a fine bit of sniping over who has more Baftas, and Brydon's sideline appearing in adverts for P&O Cruises. Does the improvised script ever cross a line? "Steve's got a zillion Baftas because he's a once-in-a-generation talent. I've got tons of Bafta nominations, we won a Bafta [for *Would I Lie to You?*], I've got a lifetime Welsh Bafta. On the show you're taking real things, but your reactions to them are not truthful. My personality is... I'm pretty content. I started out in local radio, I was a shopping channel presenter. There's no way you'd have looked at that guy and said he would go on to work with the best people in comedy — that doesn't happen. So from my point of view it's all great."

We return to the start and the change he felt on turning 60. He tells me he wrote a film years ago that never got made — "I just don't have that determination to see it through" — about a man who was on the verge of getting married. Recently he realised he wouldn't be able to play the lead anyway. "It's a funny thing with acting, you sometimes realise, 'Oh, no, I'll never play that part, will I, because I'm too old.'"

So, yes, he takes ageing seriously — eating healthily, training three times a week, the saunas and the cold plunges. "It's mortality, isn't it? It's as simple as that. It's wanting to be healthy and live longer because I have a great life," he says, grinning. "Why would I not want to go on for as long as possible?"

***The Cat in the Cupboard* by Rob Brydon, illustrated by Ellie Snowdon, is out now (Puffin £12.99)**

music

What really happened when Fleetwood Mac made Rumours

Drugs! Punch-ups! Dogs! The engineer who worked on the 1977 album reveals all. By Will Hodgkinson

EBET ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES

Fleetwood Mac: Stevie Nicks, Lindsey Buckingham, Christine McVie, Mick Fleetwood, John McVie. Below: Ken Caillat with Richard Dashut

The dramas that went into the making of Fleetwood Mac's 45 million-selling 1977 soft-rock masterpiece *Rumours* are well known: the break-ups, the affairs, the cocaine blizzards. Ken Caillat, a 29-year-old engineer who got promoted to co-producer during the album's epic, year-long recording, has revealed to me a new one. Stevie Nicks and Christine McVie had a profound and unreasonable hatred of his dog, a beagle called Scooter.

"I think it was because Scooter was a male and they both had petite, fluffy little females," says Caillat, 80, of the canine power struggle during those long, hot sessions at Record Plant studio in Sausalito, California. "Scooter would come over and sniff their parts, and the girls would go, 'That's so gross. Get your dog out of my dog's business.'"

It didn't stop there. When Scooter featured on the cover of Fleetwood Mac's 1979 album *Tusk*, baring his teeth as he attacked Caillat's trouser leg, Nicks took it as a slight. "She said, 'That was supposed to be my cover, Ken! *My cover*!'" he recalls, adding that she claimed to have put a curse on Scooter in revenge for being upstaged by him. "I replied, 'Well, Stevie, he actually died last summer.' And she said, 'Good. I'm happy.' That's when I knew she was taking herself *way* too seriously."

When Caillat met Fleetwood Mac on January 22, 1976, they were a combustible but talented group of people who, although already quite famous, were yet to explode onto the global consciousness. It is recounted in his 2012 memoir *Making Rumours*, which is published for the first time in the UK this week. This bears a remarkable similarity to *Stereophonic*, David Adjmi's hit play about a British-American rock band making an album amid break-ups, affairs and cocaine blizzards — but we'll come to that later. In the meantime you have to wonder: with the bassist John McVie splitting with the keyboardist Christine McVie, the guitarist Lindsey Buckingham splitting with the singer Nicks, and the drummer Mick Fleetwood trying to keep it all together as his marriage to the model Jenny Boyd fell apart, what did Caillat make of it all?

"Two things were happening at once," says Caillat, who worked with co-producer Richard Dashut, who proved adept at putting out fires when tempers flared. "*Rhiannon*, a single from the previous record, was still climbing the charts, so we were given a blank slate to make this album the best it could be. At the same time the band was breaking up. But Stevie's manager told her she could be a superstar if the album was a hit, so she said to everyone, 'Let's hold it together, just for this record, because I don't want to be a cleaning lady any more.'"

Nicks was indeed working as a cleaning lady, and a babysitter and waitress, in Los Angeles in 1973 when she and her partner Buckingham made the album *Buckingham Nicks*, which, although it failed to set the world alight, impressed Fleetwood enough for him to invite them into the band. "If it hadn't been for him," she told me in 2017, "I'd still be living in a two-bedroom apartment in the Valley."

Making Rumours details not only the relentless work ethic that drove the album — there's a section dedicated to the six days Caillat spent chasing the right drum sound — but also the challenge of dealing with the individuals involved. "Mick was steering the ship and he was great, but John was drunk most of the time and Stevie and Lindsey were stoned. The attitude was: hey, we're here. We wish we were home, but let's make music."

Even *Gold Dust Woman*, Nicks's ballad on the dangers of cocaine, was recorded on cocaine. "Stevie wanted to make witchlike noises at the end, so she did a little bit of coke, a little bit of pot, and a shot of brandy," Caillat says. "Then she went in and did her wailing. I thought, what is going on? Only Fleetwood Mac could make it seem normal."

Even so, it was a relatively innocent time. "On *Rumours* we were still in our kindergarten cocaine period," he says. "Unlike later, when everyone had their own little bottles, it was left out for everybody to do it, mainly so we could keep working. Every time we said we wanted to go home Mick used to come over, chant the line from that Robert Frost poem [*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*], 'I have promises to keep,/ And miles to go before I sleep,' and give us a snort."

Such was the pressure to make a masterpiece that the band members even scheduled arguments, so they didn't eat into recording time. "They had to figure out when they would have their fighting meetings," Caillat says. "I would say, 'Who feels like fighting today, and who feels like working?' Then we might do some keyboards while the others went outside to yell at each other."

'I would say, who feels like fighting today, and who feels like working?'

***Making Rumours: The Inside Story of How Fleetwood Mac Made a Masterpiece* by Ken Caillat and Steve Stiefel (Monoray £25) is out now**

Of course such tensions turned into creative fuel. Just listen to Buckingham's *Go Your Own Way* or Nicks's *Dreams* for proof. "It gave the recordings an edge because it meant that when Stevie was singing into the microphone, she was thinking, 'You guys suck! F*** you!' All I was trying to do was get my job done, and the sounds were amazing. It completely came together."

Buckingham was abrasive, but also a visionary musician, pushing the rest of Fleetwood Mac towards the sonic perfection of *Rumours*, then into uncharted waters with *Tusk*. "At that point Lindsey respected me because I could do all these things he couldn't do," Caillat says. "I remember putting this delay effect on his guitar and he changed his whole style of playing to fit in with it. Later on he tried to compete with me, but in the early days it was great."

Still, reading *Making Rumours*, you have to feel for Caillat. There is a section where, during the recording of *Go Your Own Way*, Buckingham isn't happy with his guitar solo and demands that Caillat and Dashut tape over it. Buckingham unleashes another solo, but he isn't happy with that one either. Then he tells Caillat to play the one before. When Caillat informs him that he has taped over it as requested, Buckingham leaps into the control room and throttles him.

"His veins were popping out of his neck," Caillat remembers. "Christine goes, 'Lindsey, you told him to erase it!' Of course he was coked and stoned and everything else. He used to roll joints all the time. He's a very nervous man."

There were other character peccadillos to deal with. "We learnt that you must never ask Stevie how she was doing because that would lead to 20 minutes of her going, 'I've just got my period, my dog's been fighting again...' You learnt to say, 'Good morning, Stevie. Can I get you a coffee?' John was Jekyll and Hyde — great until he started drinking — and Christine was tough. She could drink and swear you under the table. She was my favourite, actually."

Amid all this Caillat was, in his own words, "just a horny guy, trying to get laid". It proved a problem given that he had to spend all day and night locked in a windowless studio, even if Record Plant did come with its own hot tub and waterbed. He also had a huge crush on Nina Urban, Record Plant's pretty studio manager.

"I would sneak out for a little while, lean against the wall, and say to Nina, 'How ya doin'? Wanna get together later?' We never did because she always had to work. Still, it was a great time."

Unlike the time spent making *Tusk*. "That was awful," says Caillat, who was by then very rich indeed, with a Ferrari to prove it. "Lindsey cut all his hair off with scissors and ripped his pants because his girlfriend at the time, Carol Ann Harris, told him he needed to be

more 'punk'. Then he told the band: 'You have to do this or I'm quitting.' He looked around, as if to say, 'Did anyone buy that?' I certainly didn't. At one point he built a studio at his house and took all the tapes with him, so he was in total control. Mick and John protested by putting duct tape over their mouths."

The animosities didn't end there. "Lindsey and I... we're not the greatest of friends," Nicks told me in that 2017 interview, a year before she delivered to the band an ultimatum: either he went, or she did. They chose her. But when I spoke to Buckingham in 2021, he suggested another reason for being asked to leave Fleetwood Mac.

"It is possible that she has never been completely over me," he posited. "I think — and she was the one who moved away from me back then — that we both had to compartmentalise our feelings. That is not a healthy thing to do because those little compartments can remain sealed up for years until things start seeping out when you don't realise."

Given the tensions the band members faced from *Rumours* onwards, it does seem remarkable that Fleetwood Mac lasted as long as they did. "You're talking to the dude who never gives up," Fleetwood told me by way of explanation in 2021, having kept the band going one way or another since 1967. "We have not broken up." Even after the death of Christine McVie in 2022, Fleetwood still held out hope for the future, telling Mojo magazine: "I would love to see a healing between Stevie and Lindsey." Caillat says he isn't surprised at all that Fleetwood Mac lasted as long as it did.

"They didn't have a choice," he explains. "It's a money machine. Lindsey's house had gotten bigger, Mick had more ex-wives..."

And their masterpiece remains as popular as ever, almost 50 years later. Caillat still gets six-figure royalties for *Rumours*. Then there is the surprise success of *Stereophonic,* which took off on Broadway in 2024 before coming to the West End. Adjmi has claimed that any similarities are unintentional, which is a bit hard to swallow given the story is told from the perspective of Grover, a young engineer and producer who has a crush on the pretty studio manager. There's even a scene where a Buckingham-like guitarist jumps into the control room and throttles Grover for taping over a guitar solo, screaming, "Are you a f***ing idiot?" That's not so different from a line in the book: "'You're an idiot!' Lindsey screamed at me, his hands tightening around my throat."

"We sued them and now we can't talk about it," Caillat says when I bring up the similarities. "My daughter went to the show and said, 'Dad, that guy is you!'" Why didn't the play's producers simply option Caillat's book in the first place? "I guess getting your hand slapped is better than asking."

In any case it's a remarkable story, which helps to explain why *Stereophonic* — similarities to *Making Rumours* or not — has been such a hit. Since then Caillat has worked on countless albums, running the gamut from Michael Jackson to the Fall to ones by his daughter, the pop-country singer Colbie Caillat. *Rumours*, however, is the album that changed his life.

"What I learnt from Fleetwood Mac is that to make an album like *Rumours* you need the desire to be on top, to be the best," Caillat concludes. "Fleetwood Mac were like every band I ever worked with... just better."

visual art

The last word of Yayoi Kusama

Japan's star artist must have feared being remembered for gimmicks. Rachel Campbell-Johnston says this spectacular farewell fixes that

Did she know she was soon to die? I would hazard a guess that she did. As one steps into the huge Yayoi Kusama exhibition just unveiled in Amsterdam, one can't help but suspect that the Japanese art superstar had already been contemplating the demise that was announced less than a fortnight before its opening.

It would hardly have been surprising. Kusama, who checked herself into a psychiatric hospital in 1977 and remained there voluntarily from then on, was well into her nineties when she committed to collaborating on this retrospective. Her death in mid-August at 97, says the Stedelijk Museum curator Leontine Coelewij (who, like the rest of us, only heard the news two weeks later), casts the show in a suddenly different light.

If art is always in some way about attention-seeking, then, over the course of her more than seven decade-long career, Kusama proved herself a master. As a teenager enrolling in an art school in Tokyo, she rebelled against the traditional training and in the late 1950s set off for the United States. There she courted scandal as the hippy Sixties emerged. She staged "body festivals" involving naked performers, created dozens of brazenly phallic sculptures, designed clothes with holes that revealed erogenous zones, and wrote a letter to President Nixon offering to go to bed with him if he, in return, would bring the Vietnam War to a close.

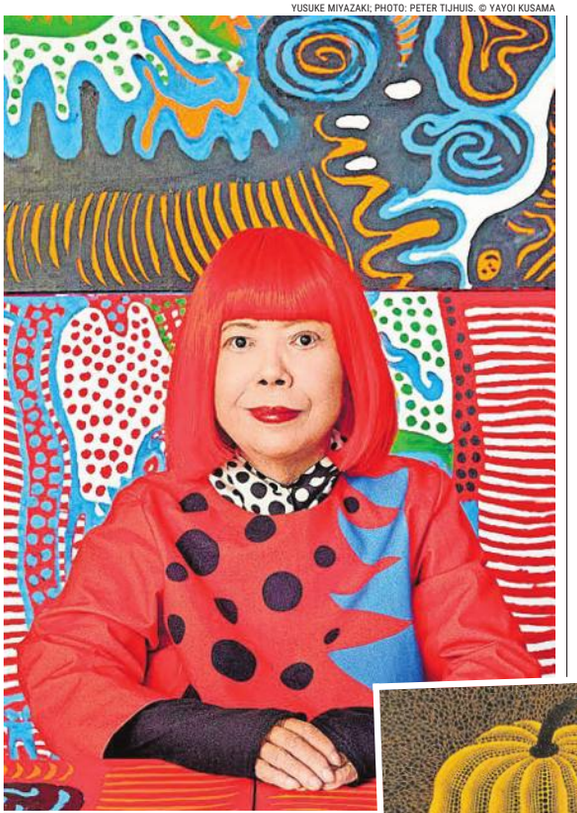
In more recent years she found fame again — an oddball became a global name. Her signature yellow pumpkins sprout in sculpture parks the world over. In 2023, when she signed a partnership deal with Louis Vuitton, her spots were printed on everything from handbags to surfboards, while a giant effigy of the artist in her signature bright red bob wig was installed over the company's flagship Champs-Élysées store. The Tardis-like experience of her mirrored "infinity rooms" guarantee a sell-out of gallery tickets.

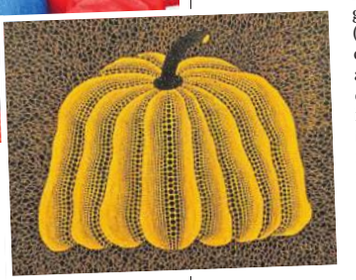
Popularity has its pitfalls. Her shows can too easily be considered a museum answer to the theme park attraction. Questions have been raised as to her work's authenticity. Was a frail old woman being turned into a factory, her ideas outsourced to fabricators who were hundreds of miles away?

When one of her pumpkin sculptures was installed on top of her dedicated museum in Tokyo, it provoked questions. It was signed and dated by the artist, yet she was said to be pretty much bedridden by that time. Sceptics started to wonder if a nonagenarian with a lifelong history of mental illness could truly be capable of overseeing the production of such large pieces. "The last decade or so of Kusama's life might be described as a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside a pumpkin," the art lawyer Thomas Danziger recently told The New York Times. "Savvy buyers would be wise to ask as many questions as they can, recognising that they are unlikely to get solid answers."

"I hope to create works which would be remembered by history," Kusama declared in her last interview, conducted by video for a Japanese newspaper in 2023. But she risks being remembered for theme park-style gimmicks and polka-dotted merchandise.

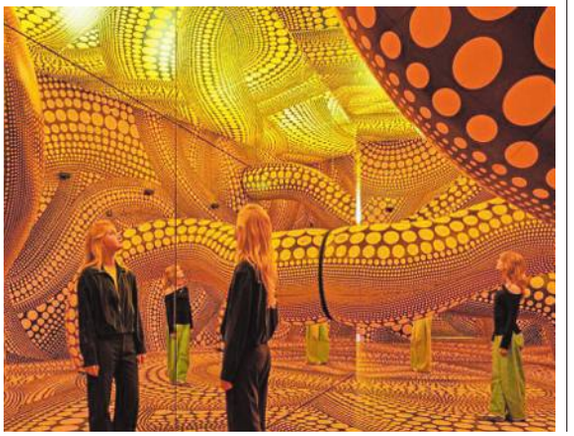
YUSUKE MIYAZAKI; PHOTO: PETER TIJHUIS. © YAYOI KUSAMA





Yayoi Kusama. Right: Amsterdam Pumpkin, 1991. Below: The Hope of the Polka Dots Buried in Infinity Will Eternally Cover the Universe, 2025

She brings all the fun of the fairground to the gallery. It's entrancing. But it's also disquieting



This is the doubt that this Stedelijk show, on which we are told she collaborated closely, sets out to redress. Many of the more than 300 exhibits, drawn from across the widest and most representative range of media in which she worked — drawing, sculpture, installations, collages, performances, poetry and fashion — that are on display will be far from her most widely recognised or, indeed, her most popular. The emphasis is not on mass production; it is on authenticity and hence on the handmade.

The signature polka dots, for instance, far from being the eye-catching designs made familiar by lucrative merchandise, are presented as the everlasting scars of a neurotic illness, the hallucinatory visions that engulfed her from earliest childhood. The hundreds of soft fabric phalluses that, coated in white paint, seethe over the surfaces of everyday objects — and even, in one particularly memorable installation, pack a rowing boat like bizarre refugees from some troubled unconscious — appear far less the result of a desire to create an impact through shock than the legacy of a childhood in which she learnt to fear sex.

The overblown bronze pumpkins are missing. Instead, the golden gourds (reminding Kusama of her childhood as the daughter of a seed merchant in Matsumoto) that became a recurring motif are represented by her earliest little papier-mâché originals.

The last rooms are covered with late works from a series of painted canvases. They were created one by one as individual works, but displayed as she intended in seamless floor-to-ceiling rows. They surround you with images of flowers, suns and faces, dazzling spots and spreading patterns of waves. It's certainly vibrant, but those who came in search of familiar thrills and selfie spots will be dismayed.

That's probably why we get an infinity room as a grand finale. You take a psychedelic escalator upwards into a mirrored space created especially for this exhibition. Passing through what feels like some miraculous cosmic portal, you find yourself immersed in a land of writhing, yellow-spotted tentacles amid measureless expanses. You start looking about to see if you can spot your reflection. Then you find it in front of you, or in some far distance. You see yourself replicated. Then you wonder if you have disappeared.

It's entrancing. But it's also disquieting. Kusama brings all the fun of the fairground's hall of mirrors to the gallery — then adds a dash of philosophy. The title is *The Hope of the Polka Dots Buried in Infinity Will Eternally Cover the Universe*. After her death the title feels particularly resonant. What was intended as a celebratory survey has become Kusama's definitive tribute. And I suspect that's exactly what she meant.

Yayoi Kusama is at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, to Jan 17

ANDREW FOX FOR THE TIMES; ALAMY; ALAN WELLER FOR THE TIMES

television

Confessions of TV's costume drama king — 'I just thought about sex all the time'

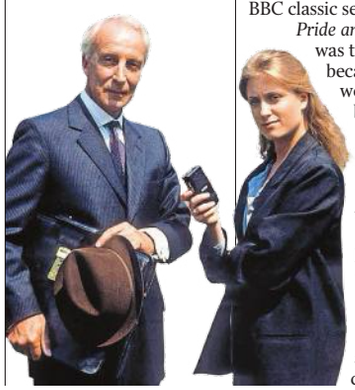
Andrew Davies gave us a shirtless Mr Darcy and put incest in War & Peace. He tells Andrew Billen about his and his wife's affairs and his 'jealous' mother — and hits back at his critics

We tend to think we know the characters because we know the original books. But when Andrew Davies, over his extraordinary and extraordinarily long career, adapts the classics for television his versions typically hit viewers with the shock of the new rather than the pleasures of gentle reacquaintance. Dignified Mr Darcy in Davies's *Pride and Prejudice* emerges from a lake, damp chest visible. When we meet his Anatole in *War & Peace* he is in bed with his sister. In his 2005 *Bleak House* Phil Davis as the sclerotic Smallweed gives such welly to his catchphrase "Shake me up, Judy" that it becomes a ringtone.

Over the decades Davies has written unflattering versions of himself into his dramas. *A Very Peculiar Practice*, a cult Eighties series, was set in a plate-glass university very like the one he taught in. Two sexually charged television plays of the same era featured a frustrated writer. Until now, however, Davies has never, explicitly at least, written about the two outstanding characters of his own life. One is his fearsome mother, Hilda, whose love for him quickly turned putrid and at whose funeral he felt not affection but anger. The other is Diana, his wife, who died in October 2023. They were married for 63 years, but for a third of that time he shared her with another man.

Having read his cracking new memoir, *An Unsuitable Boy*, I say his whole life seems to have swirled and eddied around Hilda and Diana. "That would be very fair," he says.

He is 90 on September 20, the book's publication day, but helped by regular visits from "brilliant young" collaborators who "have to be nice" to him, and Monday gym sessions, he could easily be approaching 70 instead. His present viewing addiction is *Made in Chelsea*. This, when we meet in the house in Kenilworth, near Coventry, where he has lived since 1970, he summarises as "good-looking young people, having a bloody good time".



Jennifer Ehle and Colin Firth in Pride and Prejudice in 1994. Below: Ian Richardson and Susannah Harker in House of Cards in 1990. Right: Andrew Davies at his home in Warwickshire and with Diana on their wedding day in 1960

On his dining room table sit two laptops. He is behind the one on which he is writing a "celebration" of the outrageous Cambridge spy Guy Burgess. I am opposite, next to the laptop on which he wrote *An Unsuitable Boy*, my eyes occasionally straying to a painting of a lesbian love scene on the wall behind him — it is not connected to his 2002 adaptation of *Tipping the Velvet* but, he allows, "it could have been".

He remains Britain's best and best known television adaptor of the classics. His magnificent 1994 *Middlemarch* was the first of the modern well-budgeted BBC classic serials, although he thinks *Pride and Prejudice* the next year was the real game-changer because it was on BBC1 and won a huge audience. It was boosted by a quote he gave the press promising "a really sexy adaptation" of a Jane Austen novel. "People got all these wild ideas."

But can he say hand on heart that Colin Firth's wet-shirted swim was not meant to be sexually arousing? "I can, yes. It was a kind of notion I had about nature versus culture, driving home that fundamentally Darcy was a human animal. He loves to be in this element, swimming in his lake." And his script direction for Firth that, on seeing a dishevelled Elizabeth Bennet, "Darcy is surprised to find he has an erection"? "Well, it was partly a joke, because I like putting jokes in scripts, but I was also emphasising that seeing this flushed-face girl with her dirty petticoat put sexual thoughts into his head."

In the late Eighties Davies attended one of the Hollywood script consultant Robert McKee's lectures on screenplays. One piece of advice he took away was to put sex on to the "backbone of the story". The immediate effect was apparent when he adapted Michael Dobbs's *House of Cards* in 1990 and varied the sex life of Mattie, a young female journalist, so that she slept with her source, the revolting elderly MP Francis Urquhart.

As for the incest in *War & Peace*, it was the script producer Laura Lankester who noticed Tolstoy's passage about the teenage Anatole and his sister Helene for a while being kept apart because they had become "too close". Davies says: "People were outraged and complaining, these so-called Tolstoy experts, and we could say: 'Look at page so-and-so. You haven't read the book properly.'"

Sex is certainly on the spine of Davies's memoir. In a complicated reverse-Oedipal way, as he grew up in a garden suburb of Cardiff, sex did for his relationship with his mother, who found she had given birth to a cute but "unsuitable boy".

"She was just so jealous of all my relationships. I made myself very independent of her. And we had a lot of quarrels. She would take it all very personally. I just thought about sex all the time, from when I was about 12. I thought about love when I was younger."

And she was jealous? "She was. She really couldn't bear me to cheat on her. DH Lawrence had it easy."

His mother's relationship with his wife, Diana Huntley, was chilly at first, but warmed when Hilda discovered she hated her other son's wife more. Davies had met Diana at University College London. He was in his second year, she was a fresher and "sort of" going out with Tom Courtenay (who was later cast in Davies's *A Rather English Marriage* and *Little Dorrit*).

"I knew I fancied her. And there was a moment, really probably the first time I properly slept with her, when she wore a little blue nightie that had obviously been washed so many times. I just sort of felt this rush of tenderness — and tenderness plus lust is a very powerful combination. I think that's

Keeley Hawes and Rachel Stirling in Tipping the Velvet (2002)

‘Our kids are ferociously monogamous. So we had a good influence’

***An Unsuitable Boy: A Life in Scripts* by Andrew Davies is published on Sep 20 (Alma Books £22)**

when I realised I loved her.”

There was plenty of sex thereafter — in libraries, in Tube carriages — but that was the moment. Having both strayed when he moved back to Wales after university, they reunited. He proposed when he mistakenly believed his condom had “exploded” during sex; her shriek from the bathroom was actually because the geyser had exploded. In 1960, at 23, he married her.

Their son, Bill, was born in 1965, their daughter, Anna, two years later. Diana became a primary school teacher and painter while he lectured in English at Coventry College and began writing scripts. *Who’s Going to Take Me On?* was produced by the BBC as a *Wednesday Play* in 1967, but he was advised by his agent not to relinquish his day job, and quit to become a full-time writer only in 1987 after the critical success of *A Very Peculiar Practice*.

The marriage’s infidelity was initiated by Andrew, not Diana. He had an affair with a family friend, Barbara, the wife of his writing partner, George Moore, with whom he worked for five years, mainly on children’s television programmes. Diana then began a “liaison” with George that lasted more than 20 years. It “severely tested our conjugal bonds”, he writes.

“I think it was very difficult for a time,” he says. “It’s a cliché to say the kids kept us together, but we were both very keen on the way each other parented. We had no differences at all and the kids were very fond of us. They came into bed with us in the early morning through all the years of difficulty and strife. And we liked that. I don’t think either of us seriously contemplated ending the marriage. I mean, you marry somebody else and will it be any better?”

In the book he mentions other affairs he conducted: one, when he was 35 with a 20-year-old PE and dance student called Pat. He fell for her when she “rescued” him while he was playing at pretending to drown in a swimming pool, a metaphor-rich scene that made it into *A Very Peculiar Practice*. They were lovers for 12 years, the affair downgrading into a still-enduring friendship when she slowly moved from straight to gay. He also mentions “a sharp, enigmatic German woman” called Gabriele who dumped him and a “foolish, helpless crush” on a “beautiful Polish girl.”

I could not take the guilt and chaos, I say. “No. And certainly our kids went very much the other way. They’re both ferociously monogamous. I mean, have never even glanced sideways. So we had a very good influence on them.

“I think it’s a bit strange, this thing. Young people now shag an enormous number of other people — if they’re lucky — until they’re thirtyish and then suddenly settle down and never let their eyes stray again. And that must be difficult to do.”

What is not in question is Diana and Andrew’s love for each other. I tell him I was moved by the scene in his book — I apologise for calling it a scene, but he says I can if I like — in which just before the stroke that kills her he has a final Saturday lunch with her at a local pizza restaurant. He thinks how pretty she still is, but doesn’t tell her. “Say these things when you think them,” he counsels. “That is a something I try to do: notice when you’re having a good time and say so to whoever else is there.”

So now it is just him and Jessie the cat, and his work. Present projects include a TV adaptation of Austen’s unfinished novel *The Watsons* and a stage and TV version of her *Mansfield Park*. A six-part series about Dickens has still not found a home, however, and a 12-episode version of John Updike’s *Rabbit* books is unmade because, he thinks, Updike has been cancelled for misogyny. “People think it’s easy for me to get things on, but it’s not that easy,” he says.

Also there is the television, of course. I ask what he thought of the BBC’s recent *The Other Bennet Sister*, a new take on *Pride and Prejudice*. “I thought her [Ella Bruccoleri’s] performance was excellent. I didn’t think much of it as a piece of dramatic writing and I thought the men were interchangeable,” he replies.

Davies has attracted his own critics. On a *South Bank Show* about him, the journalist Simon Hoggart said Davies was like Michelangelo with his slab of marble, chipping away until he found his statue of David — except Davies hacked at a classic until he found the Andrew Davies romp inside.

“The other thing he said about me was that what I did was crawl inside these masterpieces like a hermit crab and make my home in them,” he recalls. “I mean, I feel that was truer. But I take all these kind of things as compliments because I think that’s what any of us do when we’re reading any book. We’re all looking for ourselves in it.”

my culture fix

Domhnall Gleeson

The actor on Alan Partridge, Philip Larkin and why he cried when Roald Dahl died

My favourite film

Double Indemnity. I saw it in college and it’s just so alive, so smart. The twists and turns are electric and the performances are great. I then found out my grandad was in love with Barbara Stanwyck and that made me like it even more.

My favourite play

I could say anything from Samuel Beckett, Martin McDonagh, Enda Walsh or Conor McPherson. I’ll go for *The Walworth Farce* by Enda Walsh. It made me break my sides laughing and burst into tears.

The TV series I’m hooked on

I just finished *Widow’s Bay*. Matthew Rhys is incredible.

My favourite TV series

The combined works of Alan Partridge [played by Steve Coogan, *right*]. There’s nothing better. It makes me so happy. It’s been in my life since I was a kid and still makes me laugh.

My favourite piece of music

Marianne by Fontaines DC. I started listening to it a couple of days ago and it’s super. I didn’t stop playing their last album [*Romance*] for six months. *Horseness Is the Whatness* got stuck in my head and I couldn’t sleep for a few nights because it kept going in a loop.

The last music that made me cry

I cried recently remembering this song my grandma used to sing: *Two Little Boys* — the Foster and Allen version.

The lyric I wish I’d written

“You’re the measure of my dreams” from *A Rainy Night in Soho* by the Pogues. If that was said about me by somebody else I could just die immediately happy.

The poem that saved me

First Sight by Philip Larkin. I’ve only ever been obsessed with one poet and it was Larkin. But a lot of his work is very downbeat. This poem is unusually optimistic. The end of it is hopeful.

The instrument I play

The fiddle. I can pick out a few tunes, but I’m not good.

The instrument I wish I’d learnt

Piano or drums.

The music that cheers me up

The Strokes.

If I could own one painting it would be

A huge Bridget Riley painting. You would have to own a house big enough that you could have a room just for that.

The place I feel happiest

My home in Dublin, or sitting in a quiet pub during the day in Dublin.

My guiltiest cultural pleasure

I started listening to true crime podcasts for work when I was playing a serial killer in something. Then I realised I was listening to them when I didn’t need to and began to feel a bit bad about that.

I’m having a fantasy dinner party. I’ll invite these artists and authors

Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. I would force them to play charades.

And I’ll put on this music

Someone on piano playing along to whatever they’re doing.

The gig that I was looking forward to

The comedian John Kearns. I’ve seen him before and loved him. I was supposed to be seeing him in London with my brothers but I’ve just found out I can’t go — I’m devastated.

The film that I want to watch

Obsession. It sounds like a young person being really good at what they’re doing.

I wasted an evening watching

A man who does reviews of tinned fish on YouTube. My brother sent me them. It’s not wasted time, but I can’t believe how many I’ve watched.

The film I walked out of

As a family we walked out of *The Witches* when I was young at the bit where the Grand High Witch pushes a pram towards a cliff. It was too scary.

Underrated

Jim Carrey, Will Ferrell, Melissa McCarthy, *below*. I don’t know how they are not multiple Oscar winners for their funny performances, the amount of joy they give people.

My favourite author

Roald Dahl. I just love him. I cried when I found out he had died. He made me love reading.

The book I’m reading

The Postman Always Rings Twice by James M Cain.

The book I wish I had written

A Good Man Is Hard to Find — it’s a short story by Flannery O’Connor.

The book I couldn’t finish

Ulysses. I just have not been up to the scale of it.

***The Paper* is on Sky/ Now. *The Incomer* is out now**

books

The spook who betrayed his country for his sex life

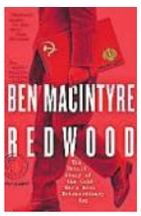
MONDADORI PORTFOLIO/GETTY IMAGES

Above: protesters during the Iranian revolution of 1978-79. Below: Vladimir Kuzichkin with his wife, Galina

Book of the week

How trouble in a KGB officer's marital bed may have changed the course of history in the Middle East.

By James Owen



Redwood
The Untold Story of the Cold War's Most Extraordinary Spy
by Ben Macintyre
Viking £25 pp464

As in all the best spy stories, what lies at the heart of *Redwood*, Ben Macintyre's mesmerising tale of Cold War espionage in Iran, is the human factor. Had it not been for a KGB officer's unforeseeable preoccupation with two rather different kinds of organ, geopolitics in the Middle East and beyond might have taken another course over the past 40 years.

Instead, what led Vladimir Kuzichkin to the house in Tehran of his MI6 counterpart, Ian McCredie, in 1981 was the delightful church music he had heard one of McCredie's colleagues play at a wedding. This belief that the British had superior abilities gave him hope that they could help him with a secret — that he suffered from erectile dysfunction. In return for treating it, he would reveal a Soviet scheme to take over Iran and seize control of its oil.

It may have been an era of rapidly developing computer technology, but it was the human skills of the agent-runner that were key to McCredie's response. Unlike many British men, he was not embarrassed by sex and sympathised with Kuzichkin's problem, which was damaging his marriage.

Diplomatic relations had been reduced to tatters by the Islamic Revolution two years earlier and McCredie was largely operating on his own in a hostile Tehran. There was little back-up from London in place — "no dead drops, no safe houses" — and he had to trust his judgment.

With the radio on and the taps running in the bathroom where they sat, to foil bugging, McCredie, only too aware it could all be a trap, promised to do what he could for Kuzichkin. Seemingly unaware of the potentially smutty connotations of their choice, MI6 codenamed the tall Russian "Redwood".

Macintyre rightly notes that spying is storytelling, which is why so many spies become novelists. The reverse is also true. Writing is understanding what makes people tick, and it is his insightful portrayal of the shifting relationship between the two spies — part mutual exploitation, part something akin to friendship — that powers *Redwood* and holds the attention through the complexities of its political context.

The pair had come to Tehran by very different routes. McCredie, a grammar school boy who was good at mathematics, had been talent-spotted by MI6 at Cambridge. He had been inspired by the efforts of young Czechs to free themselves during the Prague Spring. With him in Iran was his wife, Lucy, described with characteristic sprightly humour by Macintyre as knowing how to endure a repressive regime since she had been at a girls' boarding school.

Kuzichkin, meanwhile, had been brought up by the kind of parent who makes his son watch while he kills their pet pig with an axe. This tough love did not have the desired effect — Kuzichkin wanted to be a rock star — but later, when he learnt his real father was an engineer with Irish ancestry, he abandoned his rebellion in favour of joining the KGB.

He and his new wife, Galina, were posted to Iran to service the KGB's network of illegals — deep-cover spies who live for years under false identities. McCredie would later be astonished to learn that two of these were a mousy couple, supposedly from Luxembourg, who attended embassy play readings.

Ostensibly Kuzichkin had joined the Soviet elite, but increasingly for him it was — metaphorically and literally — a Russia without love. He came to despise the corruption that riddled even the KGB and was appalled by what he read in a clandestine copy of *The Gulag Archipelago*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's exposé of Soviet labour camps. "I myself now belonged to the organisation which was the direct perpetrator of all that terror," he reflected.

This internal conflict, which led him to begin drinking still more heavily, soon had an impact on his sex life. More stress was then heaped on Kuzichkin in an ever more volatile Tehran when he was ordered to become the bagman for the Tudeh, Iran's still important communist party, picking up intelligence and paying off its leaders.

Having recently taken control of Afghanistan through a communist puppet regime, Moscow now aimed to do the same in Iran. They planned to use the Tudeh to mount a coup against the ayatollahs, backed up by an armed invasion across their long, shared border. Fearful of a USSR whose reach extended to the Persian Gulf, the US under-secretary of defence Robert "Blowtorch Bob" Komer was ready to halt any Soviet advance with tactical nuclear weapons.

The public never knew any of this. Foreign policy analysts may perhaps quibble with Macintyre's contention that the fallout from Britain and America's operations in the region at the time, such as support for the mujahidin in Afghanistan, led to 9/11 and the ensuing conflicts. Yet he consistently succeeds in shining light into the dim recesses of espionage history, even when the details of a story — the Cambridge spies or the Iranian embassy siege — seem well known. Much of his ability to make real events read like a thriller also stems from his talent for getting sources to talk, among them McCredie himself.

The vast haul of intelligence that Kuzichkin passed on enabled the West to understand that its adversary could be beaten. As with the information being divulged at the same time by Oleg Gordievsky, the KGB London bureau chief and double agent for the British, it revealed not just the KGB's structure and plans, but also a Russia rotten to the core. In President Reagan's America it was morning, but in Moscow armed gangs raided trains and fur hats were stolen even from outside the office of the organisation's chief, Yuri Andropov.

As ever in espionage there were also victims of Redwood's betrayal. Not the least was Kuzichkin, who cracked under the strain of his deception. Having confessed all to an increasingly distant Galina — the vitamin pills supplied by London had not worked — he feared she would tell his bosses and suddenly demanded that McCredie get him out of Iran. MI6's capabilities were then focused on the war in the Falklands, and Macintyre's narrative of Kuzichkin's desperate solo run for the Turkish border is pulse-hammering.

The big losers of McCredie's success were the Tudeh. Hoping to improve relations with the Iranians, MI6 turned over the plans for the Soviet coup to Khomeini's police. The regime ruthlessly purged the party's leaders and as many as 12,000 of its followers. Their fate troubled many in the British service, who belatedly realised that the intelligence they had shared had simply helped the Islamic government to rid itself of the only surviving credible opposition.

Kuzichkin at least got his happy ending, his mojo revived in time by a beautiful Frenchwoman. No novelist would dare to invent the scenario in which he later met Alec Guinness, the actor who had played John le Carré's spymaster George Smiley.

Redwood, however, which has already been nominated for the Baillie Gifford prize for non-fiction, is chiefly its author's triumph. Topical in its subject matter, deft in its depiction of the Polaroid colours of Tehran of the time, it is also a masterclass in the ethics of espionage. Above all, it brings to life the strains and responsibilities, the emotions and passions and inspirations — the eternally human concerns — of the spy's world.

Kuzichkin cracked under the strain of his deception, confessing all to his wife, Galina

TIMES Bookshop
To order any of the books reviewed go to *timesbookshop.co.uk* or call 020 3176 2935.
Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for **Times+** members

Rebecca revisited — the real Mrs Danvers

The love life of Daphne du Maurier is imagined by Rose Tremain. By Johanna Thomas-Corr

Rose Tremain has always been drawn to outsiders. Over a half-century of fiction writing she has returned relentlessly to people stranded by class, history, circumstance or desire. From the low-born courtier Robert Merivel in *Restoration* (1989) and the transgender child Mary Ward in *Sacred Country* (1992) to the lonely, damaged figures of *The Gustav Sonata* (2016), she has made her abiding subject the humiliation of not belonging. What particularly interests Tremain is how shame distorts the outsider and makes them monstrous in the eyes of others.

Lilianne "Danni" Danowski, a Polish-born Jewish seamstress who becomes a domestic servant on the Cornish coast, is such a (fictional) figure. She first appeared in Tremain's short story *The Housekeeper*, published in her collection *The American Lover* (2014).

Tremain dreamt up an affair between Danni and the young, married novelist Daphne du Maurier, and the betrayal that follows. Unable to acknowledge her lover, Daphne transmutes her into Mrs Danvers, the creepy fictional housekeeper in her classic gothic novel *Rebecca*. Rooted in du Maurier's real-life references to "the boy in the box" — her private shorthand for her repressed attraction to women — the story treats her hidden bisexuality as the catalyst for the affair.

Tremain has expanded that short story into her 18th novel, turning its compact tale of transgressive desire and social shame into a smart, sly, sexy story about the cannibalistic relationship between a writer and the people who become her material.

Meanwhile, Richard Eyre has turned the same short story into a film, also called *The Housekeeper*. Adapted by Tremain, it will appear next year. For Eyre the story offered "the ideal combination of art, sex and death" — and that's a neat description of the novel too. "I was the evil woman," says Danni, who narrates the book. "I was her dark lady."

The story opens in 1939, after the affair has ended, with Danni operating a modest dressmaking business in Truro in the tense run-up to war. Out of a sense of "childish revenge" — and with one eye on the rising antisemitism — she decides to write her own story with a wink to du Maurier's opening line: "Last night I dreamed I saw Daphne again." What follows is a clever inversion of narrative power. Danni joins the ranks of Daphne's "lying, disreputable crew" of fiction-makers.

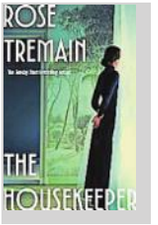
Flash back to 1936 at Manderville Hall, and Danni is the lonely, guarded housekeeper for Lord Grenville-Whithers, a gently bumbling aristocrat whose presence provides a sentimental counterbalance to the domestic drama. Danni lives by her father's stoic advice to "learn stillness", perfecting the servant's art of pretending to be as inert as furniture. Her composure is shattered by two new presences at Manderville: Grenville-Whithers's crude, brattish niece Adelaide, who is angling to inherit the estate, and the "dazzling" 29-year-old Daphne du Maurier.

Daphne arrives to research a setting for her new book, trailing a casual, imperious magnetism. Danni believes her own will is strong, yet she finds herself unsettled by the guest's attention as Daphne watches her through "sidelong glances". She can hardly believe that a successful author could be drawn to a lowly servant, but quickly her life takes a "perverse and fantastical unexpected turn".

Daphne reveals her desires and confesses her suppressed sapphic identity as "the boy in the box". Despite her marriage to a Grenadier Guards officer and her status as a mother she pursues Danni relentlessly, explaining that making love — or "waxing", as she calls it — allows her to enter a personal paradise where she is "pure boy". For Daphne this is a thrilling lark; for Danni it opens a trapdoor in her heart.

ALAMY; ULLSTEIN BILD DTL/GETTY IMAGES

Above: Daphne du Maurier in the 1930s. Left: Joan Fontaine and Judith Anderson in the 1940 film of Rebecca



The Housekeeper
by Rose Tremain
Chatto & Windus
£20 pp320

What sets Tremain apart is the buoyant, uninhibited joy of her erotics

Tremain is clear-eyed about the predatory nature of the writer's impulse — surely knowingly, since she has taken some fairly audacious liberties herself. Her Daphne announces that writers are "dictators" and "thieves" who "prise open all the shuttered places in other people". While Danni tries to protect her internal life, Daphne casually plunders it for creative capital. "We believe anything in the world can belong to us," Daphne says of writers. "But only in our minds. We don't actually take things, we just will them into our heads."

If you are used to reading younger contemporary writers, whose depictions of desire so often arrive with the anaemic chill of a clinical report, Tremain, 83, offers a refreshing change of pace. What sets her apart is the buoyant, uninhibited joy of her erotics. She has been writing about lust and sex for half a century without a trace of *pudeur*, treating physical obsession as an elemental force. Whether it is Daphne smearing Danni's breast with scarlet lipstick and demanding she talk dirty as a "refutation of shame" or heartbroken Danni feeling a "shameful little thrill" while taking the tape measure to the soft, ample "bosoms" of her dressmaking clients, Tremain captures the perilous delirium of desire with a carnal hunger.

The Housekeeper is not without missteps. The names that the fictional du Maurier conjures to conceal her "real-life" inspirations for *Rebecca* feel unconvincingly thin — Danvers has come from Danowski, Manderley from Manderville. Then there's Daphne's entitlement, which is established too early and with a heavy hand ("In this sleigh, I will slay you, Danni," she announces in a sleigh-shaped bed). Toward the end Tremain relies a little too heavily on tidy psychological shorthand to explain Daphne's artistic betrayal: "She had to save herself by making a monster of you."

The novel does not need such signposting. What makes Tremain such a master of narrative is the palpable joy she takes in the act of creation. There's an almost childlike relish to her world-building and a glorious freedom to her imagination. Approaching her fiction in a spirit of pure play, she conjures a world so sensory and atmospheric it completely ensnares the reader.

5 more great novels about great writers

The Master
by Colm Tóibín (about Henry James)
It takes a brave writer to try to get into the mind of Henry James, who kept much of himself — including his homosexuality — out of view. *The Master* explores the experiences that fed his fiction, from family tensions to friendships and encounters with other artists. Colm Tóibín is particularly interested in the relationship between observation and imagination, and in the price James pays for putting his work before human connection.

The Blue Flower
by Penelope Fitzgerald (Novalis)
Penelope Fitzgerald's final novel turns to the young German romantic poet Friedrich von Hardenberg, better known as Novalis, and his idealised love for 12-year-old Sophie von Kühn. Through his obsession Fitzgerald explores romantic idealism and the tension between imagination and reason. Strange, funny and full of pathos, the novel is less interested in explaining the poet than in capturing the combination of ordinary domestic existence and abstract thought from which his work emerged.

A Man of Parts
by David Lodge (HG Wells)
David Lodge has fun exploiting HG Wells's interest in autobiography to give his novel about the father of modern science fiction a playful awareness of the boundary between fact and invention. Wells appears as a product of his Victorian upbringing and as a man determined to escape its conventions. Sex, politics, socialism, science and the future competed for his attention, and this restless intellectual energy drives Lodge's pacey novel.

The Hours
by Michael Cunningham (Virginia Woolf)
In Richmond in 1923 Virginia Woolf is writing *Mrs Dalloway*, while decades later two women encounter the novel at difficult moments in their lives. Michael Cunningham moves between these lives to examine how literature endures far beyond its moment of creation. Meanwhile, Woolf's domestic surroundings and mounting anxieties are transformed into the material of the novel.

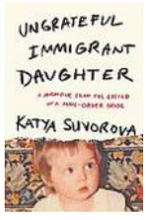
Regeneration trilogy
by Pat Barker (Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen)
The First World War provides the setting for Pat Barker's magnificent trilogy, the third of which won the Booker prize. After publicly protesting against the conduct of the war, Siegfried Sassoon arrives at Craiglockhart war hospital, where he encounters the young Wilfred Owen. Their friendship and Owen's budding poetry form part of Barker's moving exploration of how writers respond to extreme experience.

books

On the run with mum, an illegal mail-order bride

Katya Suvorova recounts her tough childhood as 'Russian trash' in America. By Ceci Browning

Katya Suvorova's memoir of growing up in America is a bracing read



Ungrateful Immigrant Daughter
A Memoir from the Child of a Mail-Order Bride
by Katya Suvorova

Alcove Press £25.99 pp320

It's a summer afternoon sometime in the second half of the 1990s. Katya Suvorova, aged four, has been left to her own devices. She is playing with a Barbie wearing sparkly blue shoes, shoes so lovely that she decides to push one up her nose as far as she can. "It starts to really hurt," she recalls. "I blow so hard my chest gets tired. Blood starts speckling out." After confessing the accident to her mother, Yuliya, the duo rush to seek help from a friendly neighbour, but when the neighbour tries to call an ambulance, Yuliya begs her not to. "Do not say a word," she whispers, "no one is supposed to know we're here."

This is one of the many close calls that Suvorova, now 33, recounts in her memoir, *Ungrateful Immigrant Daughter*. She is now a fully fledged American citizen with an almighty blue passport, but for the first chunk of her life she and her fiery-haired young mother lived in the US undocumented, fearing deportation. They had flown to Mexico from Moscow (where shootings and car bombs were then regular occurrences) when Suvorova was a toddler, and after a few days in a cheap motel been ushered over the Mexican border by an unfamiliar man, banking on the hope that "someone at border patrol would slip up and let us through without asking for our documents because we 'look American'". White, that is.

In Russia Suvorova's mother was "a waitress in a mafia-run casino". In the US she turned husband-hunter. Suvorova was dragged to the homes of men hungry for company and shut in a cupboard, "itchy and wet with pee", until Yuliya had finished wooing the suitor upstairs. Among others, there was Jerry, a stingy, grunting man whose surname Suvorova briefly adopted; Chris, who took drugs, wore a shark tooth on a gold chain and fathered Suvorova's younger sister, Masha; and then Adam, a controlling alcoholic who hit them both. None made pleasant partners. "She was laying herself bare before the American altar," Suvorova writes. "She was bargaining herself in exchange for freedom."

All this marriage wrangling kept Yuliya busy, leaving Suvorova isolated and neglected. At school she was called "Russian trash" by other kids. At home she watched her "dad" choke her mother. She threatened to run away (although never did). She had a go at slitting her wrists. To comfort herself she played a game "where I pick the lice from my head and pop them between two fingernails". One of the few other balms in her life was an occasional visit from her grandmother, known to her as Babushka, the only person she still spoke Russian with. Babushka disliked America (she said it had far too many problems, including that the grass is "too sharp"), but flew over to cook and to babysit regardless.

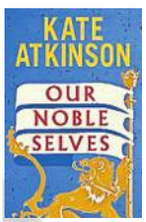
Without papers or a social security number, Yuliya couldn't get a proper job. Instead she had a string of temporary gigs, paid in cash, and used the money she saved to rent an air-conditioned $150-a-month storage unit so she and the girls would have somewhere to sleep if the husband du jour kicked them out of his house. When 9/11 happened, she was the only parent who didn't rush to the school to pick up their child. "It's an emergency for Americans," she explained to Suvorova. "It's not an emergency if you're an immigrant. The rest of us have to work."

She was a grafter, clearly, but Suvorova's largely unpitying portrait makes clear that a streak of villainy ran through her too. "Moms are supposed to feed you and wake you up and give you medicine and protect you," Suvorova writes. "My mom is sometimes not even at home when I wake up." Yuliya told her daughter to lose weight, swore at her, and labelled her ungrateful or dumb. When Suvorova confessed that Chris, her stepfather, had sexually abused her, Yuliya told her she had made a mistake, afraid that it might make her

She was dragged to the homes of men hungry for company and shut in a cupboard

You're cordially invited to the 1950s

A witty caper about the misfits charged with planning the 1951 Festival of Britain. By Patricia Nicol



Our Noble Selves
by Kate Atkinson

Doubleday £22 pp352

"A tonic to the nation" was what Gerald Barry, the director of the Festival of Britain, vowed to deliver to a war-worn, still rationed UK citizenry in 1951. In Kate Atkinson's fizzy, deliciously quaffable new caper *Our Noble Selves* — which has the festival's planning as its backdrop — Barry has a walk-on but pivotal part. In 1949 Harry Flynn is sitting morosely in St James's Park, "working his way through a corned beef sandwich while observing a skittish pair of moorhens", when he is "accosted" by Barry, his former boss at the News Chronicle.

"Good God, man, everyone thought you were dead," Barry says. Barry must feel some remorse about that as the editor who assigned Flynn to Singapore in 1941 as a "temporary foreign correspondent" for a "change of scene" — just as the Japanese began to invade. Missing, presumed dead, Flynn went from imprisonment in Changi to forced labour on the Burma Railway. After returning, still half-starved, to a "filthy, shabby and depressed" London, an inert Flynn, craving solidity, had sleepwalked into an unwise, ill-matched marriage he subsequently fled. Now Barry has a safer-sounding berth to offer: a desk job helping him corral his great exhibition.

Two years on, in the festival's "Relief" office in Savoy Court, Flynn works with "muted camaraderie" alongside other misfits washed up from the war years: Evans, a melancholy Welshman haunted by having survived the sinking of his merchant ship in the North Atlantic; Denholm, a former actor and also Guards officer who pales at the mention of the Normandy beaches; and Badger (actually Badgley), rumoured to have been rusticated there following "an incident".

The best of them is "the Boy" (Terence, "fourteen and full of appealing swagger"), an optimistic, resourceful Cockney dogsbody, "purloined from the BBC". Soon, this not-exactly-merry band of brothers is joined by Maud Ogilvie, an unmarried, middle-aged daughter of the manse who quickly reveals a razor-sharp mind ("I pay attention").

This is a romance of the office. The festival's administration — a Noah's Ark of design obsessives, British eccentrics and martinet bureaucrats — is an inspired backdrop for a capering comic novel, particularly one by a writer as drawn to colour, ticklish quirk and human folly as Atkinson.

An average Tuesday for Flynn and his colleagues in Relief (responsible for "sopping up all the bits and pieces of Festival business that no one else cared to") might involve sourcing live adders; auditioning Nell Gwyn orange-sellers; chaperoning boy scout butterfly-hunters; and firmly but politely rejecting a hospital's offer of "604 gallstones arranged in the shape of the Festival emblem". All details drawn from the archives, Atkinson's afterword insists.

Flynn becomes embroiled in stickier business when asked to oversee a "Festival Cake" competition. A bake-off, which seems rigged, is won by the overblown Mitzi Blinkhorn — despite her having produced a sickeningly over-the-top confection, impossible to reproduce on rations. Mitzi, it transpires, has friends in high places — among them Flynn's suave, sinister new boss Giles Dangerfield, who has political ambitions. Meanwhile, a female French colleague with whom Flynn went for a tedious drink has gone missing, arousing suspicions — he is rumoured to be the last person to have seen her.

Gleefully observed — also beautifully illustrated — this novel is a hoot. The characters are terrific. Its writing has merry, mischievous verve. There is richly revolting period detail: bloater-paste sandwiches; someone returning from a trencherman's lunch at Simpson's in the Strand pats a "gibbous belly". Often Atkinson's descriptions made me snigger, smirk, even laugh outright. When Flynn goes on his miserable date with the Frenchwoman Delphine Dubois, an apparently grumpy, arrogant Gaullist, she is disdainful of everything encountered in Britain. "We have Molière, Flaubert, Stendhal, Victor Hugo — giants of literature. Who do you have?"

But there is also great wisdom and warmth: the remarkable Maud is "the possessor of a canny, corvine brain";

This novel is a hoot. The characters are terrific, the writing has merry, mischievous verve

Kate Atkinson. Far right: the Festival of Britain

look negligent, that it would ruin their chances of future citizenship. "Don't say you slept in the same bed as him to the lawyers."

Years later, 17-year-old Suvorova found a magazine called *Rose Russians* while clearing out the garage. It was packed with photos of attractive women but, she says, "[didn't] look like a fashion magazine at all". The ladies posed "in front of beds, in front of houses, up close, on chairs, crossing their legs". She spotted her mother's photo above an advert that read, "I'm looking for a family and eternal love," and suddenly it was obvious. "She's a mail-order bride."

Much later Suvorova discovered another hard truth. Yuliya could have applied for a green card under the Violence Against Women Act, passed by Congress in 1994 to allow women being abused to become US residents without their partner's help. It's sometimes known as "the mail-order bride law".

Ungrateful Immigrant Daughter is a fascinating insight into what it's like to live illegally in the US and a horrifying exposé of the abuse that "mail-order brides" and their children suffer at the hands of lonely, horny men. Suvorova does cut a few narrative corners. She reveals that she cut all contact with her mother, for instance, without explaining when or why it came to that. (Who knows if Yuliya knows this character assassination is coming, or whether she would agree with its conclusions?) But this failing is redeemed by a heart-warming subplot about Suvorova reuniting with her Russian dad, whom she tracked down on Facebook. It's the worst of the reality series *90 Day Fiancé* meets the best of *Long Lost Family*; you just can't look away.

PICTURE POST/GETTY IMAGES

Flynn's streetwise but loving stepdaughter Veronica hints at a possible happier future.

This is not just an enjoyable book to read but one you feel Atkinson found entertaining to write. Less structurally ambitious than her other wartime-inspired historical novels — *Life After Life*, *A God in Ruins* and *Transcription* — it feels an easy bedfellow with the more recent Soho-set *Shrines of Gaiety*.

Its publication coincides with the 75th anniversary of the Festival of Britain, but there are austerity-era novels it feels in pub-going conversation with, such as Patrick Hamilton's *The Slaves of Solitude* and Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear*, which also involves a preposterous cake. Nods too to Greene's *The Third Man*. A tonic to the nation's readers.

PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/AP

The three great mistakes that led to President Trump

'The Mooch' admits that his faith in globalisation and free markets was 'smug and wrong'. By Sarah Ditum

Anthony Scaramucci is, as the flyleaf of this book grandly announces, the managing partner of an investment firm, the chairman of a global "thought-leadership forum" and a podcaster. But none of that is why people will read this book. The reason Scaramucci has a claim on public attention is that, for 11 days in 2017, he served as White House communications director under Donald Trump.

Even by the standards of the first Trump era, Scaramucci's brief career was memorably chaotic. He was fired after The New Yorker published an interview in which he attacked his rival White House aides in pungent terms while believing his conversation to be off the record. (One of his milder comments: "I'm not Steve Bannon, I'm not trying to suck my own cock.")

"I became famous," he writes in *All the Wrong Moves*, "as an epic failure." He was judged deceitful and hypocritical for trying to brief against his purported colleagues. But worst of all he seemed pathetic: a man who had pandered to the court of King Donald and immolated whatever credibility he had in the process. His nickname — "the Mooch" — was aptly undignified.

Since then, though, Scaramucci has reinvented himself as a trenchant critic of Trump and American politics more generally. Since the 1990s, he argues here, the US has been staggering under the consequences of "three catastrophic decisions". First, Clinton embraced free trade with China on terms that hurt US industry. Second, Bush Jr went to war without raising taxes, increasing the deficit. And third, Obama bailed out Wall Street.

All of these choices, in Scaramucci's analysis, set the stage for the populist sentiment that Trump has been able to harness. The Republican Party no longer exists: it has been hollowed out and turned into an entity Scaramucci refers to as "TrumpGOP". The Democrats are in serious danger of suffering a similar collapse. Democracy in America is in gravest peril.

All the Wrong Moves
How Three Catastrophic Decisions and Years of Sh*tshow Politics Led to Trump — and How We Find a Way Out
by Anthony Scaramucci
Bodley Head £25 pp336

None of this was inevitable, he claims. But it became inevitable because, in the late 20th century, politicians neglected what Scaramucci calls "the money view of history". They forgot the importance of "balancing wealth properly between labour and capital". Another word for this kind of analysis is Marxism, but he's canny enough to keep that bogeyman of American politics out of his mouth.

He opens the book in 1999 with the World Trade Organisation protests in Seattle. As delegates in the conference centre hammered out their globalisation agenda, nearly 50,000 people poured on to the city's streets to oppose it — a strange coalition of "the debt cancellers, the anarchists, the union leaders" and even some America-first right-wingers.

In retrospect, the "Battle of Seattle" was the last stand of class politics. As a thrusting young financier, Scaramucci found the protesters naive. "Why shouldn't trade barriers come down? Why shouldn't markets be freed up, with goods and investment money flowing across borders? Globalisation is the obvious wave of the future." Peace and prosperity would go on for ever.

Anthony Scaramucci was the White House communications director for 11 days in 2017. RIght: with Donald Trump

At least that's what he thought at the time. Today he considers his younger self to have been "smug. Arrogant. And wrong." Regardless, the Seattle anticapitalists were trounced. Free trade won. Then, two years later, 9/11 swept the board clear and almost all political protest became absorbed by the task of opposing America's wars in the Middle East.

Within a decade globalisation had gutted America's working class, shifting production overseas. At the same time financial deregulation enabled innovative ways of packaging high-risk debt, which in turn enabled rampant profit-making from mortgages and investments. Until the financial crisis bit in 2008 and it all fell apart.

Obama's bailout kept the system creaking along, but it was also clearly a kind of corporate welfare. Although Occupy Wall Street and the Tea Party movement came from different sides of the political spectrum, and had very different demands and aims, they were united, Scaramucci points out, by their call on the government: "Abandon your loyalties to big financial interests and serve the people."

Without the "money point of view", politicians are doomed to futile gestures, thinks Scaramucci. "If you don't like populist movements — and yes, there are good reasons to criticise them — then maybe don't spend thirty years carrying out a bipartisan process of creating precisely the conditions from which populist movements inevitably arise," he writes.

At which point you can easily imagine someone like the leftist American writer Rebecca Solnit throwing this book in the air and saying: "I told you so, you bloody fools." Scaramucci's canter through US history is fairly familiar to anyone who has a basic acquaintance with the material, and his conclusions feel surprising only because of who they come from. This has all been said before.

The point is that this time it's being said by a justified sinner. Scaramucci explains that he threw his lot in with Trump after belatedly recognising the error of his free-market ways and mistakenly thinking Trump might be

His short career under Trump is pitched as a moment of moral reckoning

serious about reviving American labour. The chapter covering his White House tenure is substantially the most interesting, even if his disclosures do have an air of the strategic about them.

Rather than being (as you might imagine) permanently discrediting, his humiliatingly short career as a Trump aide is pitched here as a vital moment of "moral and existential reckoning".

Without it, he says, "I could never have arrived at the ideas about our country and our crisis that I'm presenting in this book. I'm more empathetic now, more psychologically minded. I know myself better. I'm aware of my own frailty — and the frailty of others."

After that plaintive testament to his character, the book ends with a manifesto: five policies and three constitutional amendments to save America. Enacting them will require a president with "willpower, guts and political smarts". He couldn't possibly be thinking of himself — could he? It would be utter craziness if *All the Wrong Moves* turned out to be the first salvo of a Mooch 2028 campaign. But then far crazier things have happened in American politics.

books

AI is coming for your job — but don't panic!

'Future-proofing' your career is foolish. We all must embrace this new technology. By Richard Preston

It is almost four years since the release of ChatGPT, which made an artificial intelligence large language model (LLM) available to anyone with a mobile phone. If in that time you haven't wondered whether AI might at some point be able to do a white-collar job as well as or better than you, then you must be a) remarkably incurious, b) stupendously self-assured, or c) retired.

If it's b), then Daniel Susskind has some warnings to puncture that confidence. As an academic and a member of the government's expert advisory panel on AI and the future of work, he regularly comes into contact with professions whose members feel sure that AI is going to be jolly useful for the repetitive, mundane tasks that no one enjoys. And they are equally sure that it will never be able to take on the creative, client-facing, expense-account-lunching roles for which they charge hundreds of pounds an hour.

Accountants believe that their clients want "the personal touch" and "empathetic interaction"; doctors that their patients value their bedside manner; lawyers that their firm handshake and confident manner are what draws in business. But as Susskind says, people use accountants to sort out their taxes efficiently and they are likely to take the most effective and affordable option available; patients value accurate diagnosis and treatment above everything else; and legal clients want to know with as much certainty as possible whether they are likely to win a dispute.

We believe that "soft skills" are uniquely human. And if we find a task particularly mentally taxing, we assume that AI will also find it hard — even more so if it's something that we like to think of as creative, or particularly enjoy doing. But that takes no account of the speed with which AI models are developing, nor the fact that artificial general intelligence, a system that Susskind says will "do every economically useful task better than us", is within reach.

So what are we — and, perhaps more pertinently, our children and grandchildren — meant to do in the face of a revolution that threatens to make geniuses look like slowcoaches? Run towards it, not away, is the gist of Susskind's argument.

An earlier, more modest scientific upheaval is a useful point of comparison. In 1982 Wilfred Cockcroft, a mathematician at Hull University, published a government-commissioned report into how the education system should respond to the proliferation of cheap pocket calculators. His advice, in short, was "teach both, test both", and today GCSE maths still combines calculator and noncalculator papers.

The same applies to AI, Susskind thinks. Numeracy and literacy remain essential tools, but we also need to learn how to use the new machine power at our fingertips. That requires critical intelligence: AI's answers aren't flawless and our questions must be framed so as to probe and elicit useful information, which we retain the power to assess and interrogate. Writing prompts is in itself a valuable skill that school pupils and university students should learn. We also need to teach the young how to manage distraction: screens are an adjunct to learning, not a substitute brain.

There's an assumption, perhaps correct, that students largely use AI as a shortcut to avoid too much burdensome reading and writing. But Susskind is good on how an LLM, properly used, can be an invaluable personal tutor. We know that the best results tend to come from personalised, one-to-one tuition, and if AI is used to explain difficult concepts, step by step, it can be a trusted collaborator rather than a cheat sheet.

But should our children be bothering with university at all if AI can do white-collar jobs? Yes, not least because — and it's not until Susskind's final 30 pages that he says it explicitly — AI is not human. Ta-da! Of course it's not, and we will always need to exercise critical thinking and moral and ethical judgment. AI may diagnose illness better than ever before, but we surely don't want it to make decisions about when to end a life.

Properly used, AI can be an invaluable personal tutor rather than a cheat sheet

Susskind knows very well that any thoughts about AI can look outdated in a matter of months, so he's not so foolish as to tell us which jobs will survive: the cliché that firms used to trot out about "future-proofing" your career is dead.

His advice is not to construct your identity round a job — there is already

What Should My Children Do?
How to Flourish in the Age of AI
by Daniel Susskind

Allen Lane £20 pp240

'I have a slight sense of foreboding'

Sebastian Faulks is back with the story of a British soldier sent to febrile Palestine in 1947. By John Self

As a novelist Sebastian Faulks is best known for widescreen historical epics — *Birdsong*, *Human Traces* — but there's a playful element to him too. He has written a Jeeves and Wooster novel, has appeared on stage in an adaptation of *Birdsong* and even plays cricket in a team of authors. The good thing about this protean approach is that you never know what you're going to get next. The bad thing is that for every *Fool's Alphabet* — his charming novel told in alphabetical, nonchronological chapters — there's a *Seventh Son*, his wildly misconceived sci-fi novel that was the worst book I read in its year.

With *Farewell to Eden* he seems to be back in straight-man mode. It covers the life of Philip Deval, an Englishman, from the 1940s to the 1980s. When we meet him it's 1951 and he has just taken a job as a teacher in a girls' school: Witchelm House, all iron gates and turrets. He isn't really qualified ("Christ, how long can I get away with this?") but they are desperate, and so is he.

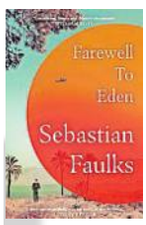
Most of the staff — like Philip — are distant and aloof, and he only really deals with the principal, Mrs Graveney, who says things like, "We see the world once only. In childhood. The rest is remembering," and the music teacher, Frances Darwood, who says things like, "I wonder, Mr Deval, if later you might like to come to my room and listen to some organ music." Oh yes?

Things start to pick up, for the reader at least: the school caretaker dies suddenly and the school principal fears the inquest might cause controversy, so asks Philip to nobble the coroner. But then we're whisked off to Philip's previous life, working for British Army peacekeepers in Palestine in 1947 (a story line inspired by Faulks's father, who was sent to Palestine at the end of the war) It's a febrile place. The British Mandate is due to expire and Jewish refugees from Europe are pouring in. "I have a slight sense of foreboding," Philip says to a colleague, with heroic understatement.

The tension is not between Arabs and Jews but between Jews and the British as a colonial power, with the Zionist terrorist groups Irgun and the Stern Gang carrying out a series of atrocities. (Faulks is careful in his afterword to note that all the terrorist acts in the book, or ones very like them, really happened.)

As for the Arabs, Philip is frustrated by their lack of organisation and leadership in the face of "the betrayal and displacement of the native population". He voices his fears to Hamad, an Arab officer in the Palestine police. "Get yourselves a leader. And an army," he tells him. "If you don't organise, you're going to lose it all. Because we British, we're going to wash our hands of it and tell the United Nations to sort it out."

Faulks is clearly bringing out parallels with today in his account of Palestine and the birth of the modern state of Israel. The British in Palestine must cope with a refugee crisis as European Jews arrive on boats, hundreds at a time, while other aspects have even wider relevance. "Humans had worked out the movements of the planets and prised apart the indivisible atom," Philip thinks, "but a group of closely related people in a fertile landscape couldn't find a way to coexist. Politics was the one thing people couldn't do. In the end they would opt for massacre."



Farewell to Eden
by Sebastian Faulks

Hutchinson Heinemann £22 pp368

DAVID HARTLEY/SHUTTERSTOCK

The novelist Sebastian Faulks

GETTY IMAGES

"identity mismatch" among graduates who thought they were on a particular trajectory and are unwilling to settle for a different role. Focus on who you are, not what you do. Yes, some will choose to be plumbers or electricians, but those who feel their skills are mental rather than physical should pursue a specialism where the underlying problems are of interest to them, rather than focus on the status presently attached to it.

In some ways universities can return to what they were half a century and more ago: places in which to develop a moral and ethical framework and become a better, more rounded citizen. Although they will have to shake off what Susskind describes as "an increasingly severe moral monoculture" that stifles diversity of thought and opinion.

As the AI revolution speeds up, the advice to embrace and work with it will strike some as Panglossian in the extreme. But what else should we do? Curl up in bed and hope it all goes away?

Throughout all this chewy business, Faulks is a warm host. He tells us what we need to know, with characters in conversation helpfully filling in the background. ("Mrs Graveney smiled. 'We're told an end to rationing is in sight.'") He has done his research, and the scenes in Palestine and at Witchelm are richly realised. The themes threaded through the book, particularly religious faith, are handled smoothly if not always subtly. (One character, whose fate turns out to be key to the plot, is called Lord.)

That was how I felt until 25 pages before the end, when a huge revelation is dropped on us. It's an audacious rug-pull that shows Faulks hasn't given up on surprising the reader, and it changes what we have read so far. But it feels not so much playful as a straightforward cheat. You see, most of the book is from Philip's viewpoint, and for the surprise to work Faulks has to leave out some of the biggest things Philip experienced — for no reason except to pull a trick on us later.

Suddenly we're not in the story any more but dragged back into the room and thinking about the author. Your experience may differ, of course, and the story up to that point doesn't lose its qualities. But if you ask me — to adopt one of Faulks's own interests — this just isn't cricket.

TIMES Bookshop { To order any of the books reviewed go to *timesbookshop.co.uk* or call 020 3176 2935. Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for **Times+** members

Take the Hamlet test: are you a great leader or just lucky?

Enjoy this sprawling survey for its trivia, but ignore its author's silly conclusions. By Pratinav Anil

The pomegranate juice business is an odd place to mount an inquiry into the powers of great men, but the polymathic physiologist turned pop historian Jared Diamond, 88, is a quirky character. Until recently, he informs us, there was no such thing as the pomegranate-industrial complex. Humanity had domesticated the fruit 5,000 years ago. Nobody had thought seriously of turning the thing into a mass-market beverage.

Enter Lynda and Stewart Resnick, a pair of Californian entrepreneurs. In 1987 Stewart bought farmland with 108 acres of pomegranate bushes. A decade on, the couple had heard about the fruit's antioxidant properties and scented an opportunity. They possessed half of America's pomegranate supply, pots of money and, crucially, no penny-pinching shareholders to tell them to stop being silly. More than $100 million was spent on publicity, tens of millions more on medical research. Eventually the celebrated double-bubble bottle of POM Wonderful appeared.

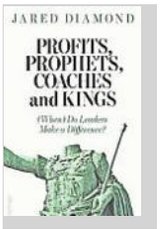
Rivals piled in, selling apple-and-grape concoctions containing less than 1 per cent pomegranate as "pomegranate juice". Litigation went to the Supreme Court. Years passed before the Resnicks turned a profit. Blitzed pomegranates are now a thriving trade and we have American entrepreneurs to thank for it.

This odd tale occupies nearly a whole chapter of *Profits, Prophets, Coaches and Kings*. The Resnicks neatly encapsulate Diamond's dilemma: do Great Men make history, as Thomas Carlyle believed, or do circumstances make Great Men, as Leo Tolstoy supposed? Generations of historians have dressed the quarrel up as the problem of agency and structure and buried the answer beneath mountains of qualification.

Diamond does much the same. His rather bathetic conclusion is that sometimes leaders matter, sometimes they don't. There is something admirable about the octogenarian still asking whopping questions, even if no decisive answers are forthcoming.

The new book is Diamond-lite, less recognisably the work of the author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. That Pulitzer-winning bestseller explained the unequal fortunes of civilisations through a heavy dose of geographic determinism. Europe and Asia pulled ahead of the nations of the new world, Diamond argues, thanks to a generous bequest of domesticable plants and animals that enabled food surpluses and dense populations, and, as a result, resistance to the epidemic germs that overwhelmed American societies after the Columbian encounter.

Now, however, Diamond has relented, conceding that exceptional men may on occasion determine the course of history. To be sure, circumstances command top billing. Genghis Khan, for example, was a beneficiary of a few unusually wet decades on the Mongolian steppe, which meant more grass, horses, livestock and cavalrymen. In a different climate he might have been merely another run-of-the-mill marauder.



Profits, Prophets, Coaches and Kings
(When) Do Leaders Make a Difference?
by Jared Diamond
Allen Lane £25 pp288

In a different climate Genghis Khan might have been a run-of-the-mill marauder

To distinguish the indispensable leader from the merely lucky one, Diamond devises his "Hamlet test". If Shakespeare had died at ten, could Marlowe, Jonson or Webster have produced *Hamlet*? Diamond thinks not, since none of them "remotely approach" Shakespeare, and he therefore pronounces him unique. This is tosh. Marlowe died at 29, when Shakespeare was still working in his formidable shadow. In any case, literary criticism hardly permits such certainties. That Shakespeare is "better" than Marlowe is a judgment of taste, and Diamond's approach is frankly puerile.

The conceit works rather better on Seretse Khama, Botswana's first president. At independence in 1966, the country possessed seven miles of paved road and 22 university graduates. The next year it struck diamonds. Khama, the chief of the largest tribe, surrendered his tribe's mineral rights to the state and persuaded other chiefs to follow. The country retained experienced expatriate civil servants and invested the proceeds instead of showering them on cronies. Botswana duly escaped the "resource curse" that blighted so many mineral-rich African states. It follows that Khama was unusual. No other Botswanan leader could have replicated his success.

Diamond's case for Rachel Carson is shakier. He rightly admires the rare combination of scientific authority and literary brilliance behind *Silent Spring*, her 1962 book that showed the perils of DDT pesticide, but overeggs her indispensability to environmentalism. His own evidence suggests that anxiety about pesticides was already mounting. The spectacular Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969 was of equal importance in ensuring the creation of America's Environmental Protection Agency the following year. Diamond concedes that without Carson the movement would have got there anyway, only more slowly.

The larger problem is Diamond's faith in "natural experiments" and his overfondness for control groups, case studies and statistical significance, as though one might apply a Bunsen burner to Bourbons and Bonapartes.

Diamond cites a study using unpaid New York parking tickets among UN diplomats as an "operationalised measure" of corruption. Kuwaitis accumulated 294 violations per diplomatic car each year, Egyptians 141, while diplomats from 22 countries — Norway and Sweden among them —managed none. Once New York could revoke diplomatic plates, violations fell by 98 per cent. The takeaway is that corruption reflects both inherited social norms and the likelihood of being punished. Leaping from an individual who "parks like a rotter on Lexington Avenue" to a "measure of national corruption" shows chutzpah on Diamond's part.

Diamond likewise cites a study that takes dynastic inbreeding among European monarchs as a proxy for diminished intelligence and correlates it with territorial growth. Smarter kings, it finds, acquired more territory. Tell that to Charles V, under whose prodigious Habsburg jaw a huge inheritance grew even fatter with the Spanish conquests of Mexico and Peru.

This is a very American production, written in a gushing prose to match. Indeed, it has the shop-worn sincerity of a Ucas personal statement. "From childhood on, I've grappled with the question, '(When) do leaders make a difference?'" Diamond says at the outset. A paragraph later, he tells us that at 23 he moved to Germany "to understand the world of Bach, Goethe and Hitler".

Most jobbing historians suffer from a nervous tic of qualification, leaving them reliant on "perhaps", "arguably" and "the evidence is incomplete". Diamond breezes past such inhibitions with the assurance of an uncle three pints into Sunday lunch. His conclusions are often little more than vibes dressed up as science. Diamond hopes that, having read his study, we shall find leadership "as relevant to our personal lives" as he does, confirming that his book belongs on the self-help shelves. It is ever so entertaining, but one should remember that much of it is cheerful nonsense.

ALAMY

A 1211 manuscript depicting a battle between the Mongols, led by Genghis Khan, and the Chinese cavalry

books

TOM CORNELISSEN

Lieke Marsman

A young woman's guide to living with a death sentence

Lieke Marsman kept a diary following the trajectory of her incurable bone cancer. She died this year aged 35. By Kat Lister

In the opening pages of Lieke Marsman's cerebral exploration of her mortality, we find her on the hospital floor emitting "a loud, animalistic noise" as she is told that her cancer diagnosis is now terminal.

It is a gut-wrenching prelude to a book that for the most part resists primal emotion in favour of erudite poise. But "how else are you supposed to behave when handed a death sentence?" she asks us.

It is a question without a singular answer. And so what follows for Marsman is a quest to get to the heart of what living with hope means when you are told that time is running out — the "ticking everywhere", as she calls it. Interlacing essays, poems and diary entries, Marsman, the poet laureate of the Netherlands from 2021 to 2023, meditates on her incurable illness — chondrosarcoma, a rare type of bone cancer — with curiosity, lucidity and strangely invigorating wit.

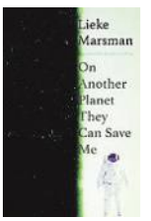
In 2017, when Marsman was 27, a malignant tumour was found in her upper back. Surgery successfully removed it, but permanent damage was done to her right arm, making it

'Can my vanity withstand the loss of the limb?' she asks as her arm is amputated

impossible to raise it. She wrote poetry to make sense of it. The collection *The following scan will last five minutes* was published in 2018 and *In my basket* in 2021, poetry that explores the line between the "epic" and the "quotidian" when "the MRI tunnel speaks" to us.

Her slim memoir *On Another Planet They Can Save Me*, an attempt to find clarity in "a crazy and cloudy place", was a bestseller in her homeland when it was published last year. Existential questions ("What qualifies as pointless suffering and what doesn't?") are interspersed with corporeal ones. "Can my vanity withstand the loss of the limb?" she asks at the point when radiotherapy on a new tumour in her shoulder has no effect and her right arm and shoulder are amputated. She interweaves ancient Greek mythology and quantum mechanics, and darts from religion to science to philosophy.

She provides diary entries to loosely pin the trajectory of an illness in flux, "the little balls of failed cartilage in my lungs, balls that will slowly, agonisingly, take over until, at last, I suffocate", and the random shuffle of her "seven operations, endless radiation sessions, years of chemo pills, experimental immunotherapy, complications, sudden swellings, days of vomiting". She catalogues "the MRIs, CT scans, lung X-rays, biopsies" but, above all, the myriad "breaking-bad-news" conversations with doctors who can't seem to grasp her willingness to try whatever is available — gene therapy, drugs only tested on mice — in her quest to keep hope alive.



On Another Planet They Can Save Me
by Lieke Marsman, translated by Sophie Collins

Daunt Originals
£11.99 pp192

Hope is a capricious state of mind when the amputation of an arm and shoulder is considered "a piece of cake" because "taking action is always easier than passively enduring". The pain of cancer, unlike the pain of surgery, is "a noose that tightens around your neck with each passing day". It is a pain "that keeps dragging you back into the 'now'", she writes of its power to hold you in the present tense with its throbbing insistence of "NOW, and NOW, and NOW".

Marsman isn't the first writer to investigate her experience of illness. The British memoirist Jenny Diski, in her 2014 essay titled *A Diagnosis*, addressed the ubiquity of cancer narratives when faced with her terminal diagnosis. How do you write about cancer anew, she asked. "You learn that there is a process, and that it doesn't very much matter what you write, but how you do it," Diski said. Marsman too grapples with the usefulness of sharing "such private experiences in a book like this". Yet she decides that there is value in doing so: "To show how, when logic turns out to be illogical... when, above all, people are traumatised, we start to drift into unknown territory."

Marsman died in June at the age of 35. "This is still my life. Mine. Even if it spells my death," she writes in her generous, full-hearted book. "And that thought, too, is a relief. This is how my life has been shaped. I live it with great difficulty, but I live it gladly, too."

Rereading Winter's Bone by Daniel Woodrell

A tough teen scours the lawless Ozarks for her dad in this nerve-jangling 'country noir'. By Robbie Millen

Ree Dolly is a teenage heroine who makes hard-riding, gun-toting Mattie Ross of *True Grit* look like a snowflake. Ree is 16 and knows how to swing a wood-chopping axe. She has to. No one else is going to help her. Her shiftless father has disappeared, her mom is "medicated and lost to the present" and she has two little brothers to look after.

In *Winter's Bone*, Daniel Woodrell's nerve-jangling 2006 novel, Ree is on a mission to find out what happened to her father, Jessup, a "furtive man given to uttering quick pleading promises that made it easier for him to walk out the door and be gone". He is a lowlife hillbilly who has one skill that makes him valuable in the Missouri Ozarks — he cooks crank (crystal meth). This time his vanishing has consequences: the family's home and land is surety for his bail bond. If he doesn't turn up to court next week it will be seized and they will be homeless.

But these are the lawless Ozarks — you can't just ask people where he has gone. From childhood the clannish inhabitants of these hills and valleys have been groomed to "abide by the remorseless blood-soaked commandments" that govern lives "outside square law". Yet Ree persists in asking questions.

"That's a real good way to end up et by hogs, or wishin' you was," her Uncle Teardrop warns her. "You ain't no silly assed town girl. You know better'n that foolishness." He may be called Teardrop but he's not wet. His face was melted by a meth lab explosion. "There wasn't enough ear nub remaining to hang sunglasses on... Three blue teardrops done in jailhouse ink fell in a row from the corner of the eye on his scarred side. Folks said the teardrops meant he'd three times done grisly prison deeds that needed doing but didn't need to be gabbed about."

He's terrifying, but not as blood-chilling as Thump Milton, the patriarch of the Milton clan who may know Jessup's whereabouts. "His face was a monument to Ozark stone, with juts and angles and cold shaded parts that the sun never touched... His eyes went inside you to the depths without asking and helped themselves to anything they wanted." The sense of menace leaks from the page. So how far will Ree go to find out the truth about her father? All the way, of course. This is "country noir" and people must suffer.

Woodrell, who died last year, aged 72, wrote nine novels but is best known for *Winter's Bone*, which became a film in 2010 starring Jennifer Lawrence. The people he writes about are dirt-poor but his style is grand. How's this to describe the after-effects of a beating? "All her aches were joined as a chorus to sing pain throughout her flesh and thoughts."

Ashlee Thompson, Jennifer Lawrence and Isaiah Stone in the 2010 film of Winter's Bone

Her family are destined "to walk only the beaten Dolly path to the shadowed place, live and die in keeping with those bloodline customs fiercest held".

Lovely phrasings abound. Ree's little brothers "nearly always went about shoulder to shoulder... moving about in a spooky, instinctive tandem, like scampering quotation marks". (One of them, leaping to her defence, gallantly declares: "Nobody gets to hit my sister who ain't her brother.") And as in the best of American gothic, there's that ever-present mood of sudden death and doom. We learn in passing that an uncle "who'd lived through Khe Sanh and four marriages, then died at a roller-skating rink from something he'd snorted".

Woodrell, like Ree, was "bred'n buttered" in the Missouri Ozarks. He dropped out of high school at 17 and joined the Marines. He was discharged for "antisocial tendencies", having dabbled in drugs, and eventually in his late twenties found his way to university and writing. He returned to live in a small town called West Plains.

In the hills and valleys they 'abide by blood-soaked commandments'

He coined the phrase "country noir" to describe his type of crime writing. In 1994 he wrote that "the practitioners of country noir have a slight advantage over their urban peers in that there is a bounty of hokey expectations of down-home America that can be exposed and worked against to great effect... To portray the allegedly folksy and bucolic heartland as the frequently rude and savage and dark world those of us who've done our time there know it can be is to explode a happy myth of fantasy-America that citizens like to conjure when speaking of the good old days, or pondering retirement to safety and order."

Woodrell was part of a jaw-sockingly powerful tradition — James Lee Burke, SA Cosby, Donald Ray Pollock, Chris Offutt and Michael Farris Smith still writing today, back to Cormac McCarthy, Jim Thompson and the mighty Flannery O'Connor. Rural America has its problems, but its troubled, blood-watered soil keeps bred'n buttering brilliant writers.

bestsellers

TIMES Bookshop
To order any of the books reviewed go to *timesbookshop.co.uk* or call 020 3176 2935.
Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for **Times**+ members

You can tell it's September not just by the crisp mornings and soothing drizzle but all the moving and shaking in the charts this week. Isn't it fun?

Check out new books from William Boyd (with the third instalment of his Sixties spy novels starring Gabriel Dax, *Cold Sunset*, at No 4 in hardback fiction), Janice Hallett (*The Silent Appeal* at No 6 in hardback fiction, featuring more amateur theatricals and Agatha Christie-ish mysteries), plus Alice Roberts, Lucy Worsley, Gordon Brown, Yotam Ottolenghi and more.

The books desk's favourite alumnus, James Marriott, has also popped up at No 9 in hardback non-fiction with his rousing polemic, *The New Dark Ages*. You'll have to forgive us for a gentle glow of avuncular pride.

Paperback Fiction

1 (1) **The Correspondent** Virginia Evans *Penguin Books £9.99*
2 (new) **Based on a True Story** Sarah Vaughan *Simon & Schuster £9.99*
3 (new) **There Is No Antimemetics Division** qntm *Cornerstone £9.99*
4 (new) **Buckeye** Patrick Ryan *Bloomsbury £10.99*
5 (4) **Brain Damage** Freida McFadden *Poisoned Pen Press £9.99*
6 (5) **The Eights** Joanna Miller *Penguin £9.99*
7 (6) **The Names** Florence Knapp *Phoenix £10.99*
8 (7) **My Husband's Wife** Alice Feeney *Pan Books £9.99*
9 (3) **Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil** VE Schwab *Tor £10.99*
10 (9) **East of Eden** John Steinbeck *Penguin £12.99*

Hardback Fiction

1 (new) **The Knave and the Moon** Rachel Gillig *Orbit £25*
2 (1) **Agrippa** Robert Harris *Hutchinson Heinemann £22*
3 (new) **Styx** Nikita Gill *Simon & Schuster £20*
4 (new) **Cold Sunset** William Boyd *Viking £20*
5 (3) **May We Feed the King** Rebecca Perry *Granta £14.99*
6 (new) **The Silent Appeal** Janice Hallett *Viper £20*
7 (5) **Yesteryear** Caro Claire Burke *4th Estate £16.99*
8 (8) **Fruit Fly** Josh Silver *Oneworld £16.99*
9 (new) **The Goddess Queen** Alice Roberts *Gallery £22*
10 (new) **Blightfall** Brandon Sanderson & Janci Patterson *Gollancz £25*

Paperback Non-fiction

1 (4) **The Finest Hotel in Kabul** Lyse Doucet *Cornerstone £11.99*
2 (1) **Murdoku: 80 Murder Mystery Logic Puzzles** M Garand *Penguin £16.99*
3 (new) **I Deliver Parcels in Beijing: On Making a Living** Hu Anyan *Penguin £12.99*
4 (2) **Careless People** Sarah Wynn-Williams *Pan Books £10.99*
5 (5) **The Odyssey** Homer *WW Norton £14.99*
6 (6) **Kitchen Confidential** Anthony Bourdain *Bloomsbury £12.99*
7 (new) **The Killer Isn't Alice** Iris Starling *Century £14.99*
8 (3) **Moonlight Express** Monisha Rajesh *Bloomsbury £10.99*
9 (9) **The Longest Walk Home** Ray Bailey & David Wilkins *Quercus £12.99*
10 (8) **Mother Mary Comes to Me** Arundhati Roy *Penguin £12.99*

Hardback Non-fiction

1 (1) **The Cauldron** Simon Sebag Montefiore *Weidenfeld & Nicolson £25*
2 (new) **Queens and Kings** Lucy Worsley *Hodder & Stoughton £25*
3 (new) **A Life in Lyrics** Freddie Mercury & Mary Austin *HarperCollins £30*
4 (new) **It's Giving Life** GK Barry *Ebury Spotlight £22*
5 (3) **London Falling** Patrick Radden Keefe *Picador £22*
6 (new) **The Future Starts with Us** Gordon Brown *Simon & Schuster £25*
7 (2) **The Castle** Jon Ronson *Viking £20*
8 (new) **Ottolenghi Simple Too** Yotam Ottolenghi & Verena Lochmuller *Ebury £30*
9 (new) **The New Dark Ages** James Marriott *Bodley Head £14.99*
10 (new) **The Ancient Ways** Seren Hawley-Plows *Bluebird £16.99*

Waterstones THE NUMBER IN PARENTHESES REPRESENTS CHART POSITIONS LAST WEEK. DATA SUPPLIED BY AND COPYRIGHT TO WATERSTONES FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 5

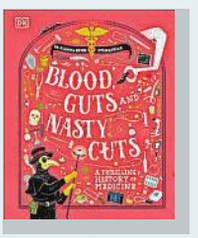
children's book of the week

Guts, gore and factoids galore. By Lucy Bannerman

Who's ready for some blood and guts? This is a brisk, lively history of medicine throughout the ages. It's also very proud to be a children's history book about something other than kings, queens or famous people.

"Whereas the stories of kings and queens concern a very few of the richest people in society, medicine affects all of us, from the poorest beggar to the wealthiest lord," writes the author, Alanna Skuse, a medicine historian and professor of English literature.

Here, she has fun romping through many of the wild and surprising ways people have tried to stay alive in various societies throughout human history. Spoiler: "Hanging a toad around your neck definitely didn't work to cure the plague, and putting animal blood into humans was a terrible idea." More effective was an early form of vaccination used in 16th-century China: "Dried up smallpox scabs were ground into powder and blown up people's noses. This did work!"



Blood, Guts, and Nasty Cuts
A Thrilling History of Medicine
by Alanna Skuse (9+)
DK £14.99 pp80

We get a a crash course in plastic surgery, ancient India-style, based on a 2,600-year-old method for reconstructing the noses of patients who had had theirs cut off as a punishment for breaking the law. "Use a leaf (because paper won't be invented for another 700 years) to make a template the size of the missing piece of nose. Then, get crafty. With your leaf template, cut a flap of skin from the patient's cheek or forehead. Fold the flap across to replace the missing bit of nose, but remember to put two little pipes in the patient's nostrils so they can breathe! Once the skin is in place, your work is almost done. Sew the flap of skin onto the nose and squish it into shape. Then, get some biting ants. Wait for your ant to bite the two bits of skin together, then twist off its body. The new nose is now attached, held together by the ants' jaws!" Don't try that at home. Visually, it's a treat, with a lively mix of illustration and photography.

All the gore is just a squeamish sweetener; what's really being administered is an intelligent overview of many of the major scientific breakthroughs and medical miracles that we all depend on today.

SAVE UP TO £750PP^

Imperial Cities of Morocco TOUR
THE SERVICES OF AN EXPERIENCED TOUR MANAGER

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,709
PER PERSON

Return flights plus transfers
Seven nights in four-to five-star accommodation with daily breakfast and seven dinners
Guided tours and visits including Marrakesh, Volubilis, Fez, Meknes, Rabat and the Hassan II Mosque
Visit to a vineyard, with a wine tasting
Attend La Maison Arabe's world-renowned cooking workshop
Rooftop drinks in Marrakesh's old town

Marrakesh, Rabat, Fez and Meknes – these are the imperial cities of Morocco and all are listed by Unesco as World Heritage sites. Their rich history comes alive in the narrow streets and the cool, mosaic lined courtyards of elegant mosques and royal palaces. For fascinating history, diverse and exciting cities, superb architecture, an extraordinary landscape and a rich culinary heritage, look no further than this splendid tour of Morocco.

Selected departures January to December 2027 and February to December 2028

RIVIERA TRAVEL
Which? Recommended Provider ESCORTED TOURS
Call now to book
0808 258 2569 thetimes.com/riviera-im7
TIMES Travel Partner

Prices based on two people sharing. Single rooms available at a supplement. Additional entrance costs may apply. Travel insurance is not included but is strongly recommended. This holiday is operated by and subject to booking conditions of Riviera Travel, ABTA V4744 ATOL 3430 protected, a company independent of News UK. Subject to availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. For further information please write to Riviera Travel, New Manor, 328 Wetmore Road, Burton upon Trent, Staffs, DE14 1SP. See website for full details. ^Save up to £750 per person on selected Riviera Travel European Tours, Worldwide tours, River Cruises and Yacht cruises departing in 2027. Valid on new bookings only, made between 1 September 2026 and 28 October 2026. This offer is available while availability lasts on selected departures only. The saving has already been applied as a price reduction to the advertised online price. This offer may be combined with other promotions unless stated otherwise and is subject to availability on a first-come, first-served basis for individual departures. Riviera Travel reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time without prior notice. All bookings are subject to Riviera Travel's standard booking terms and conditions.

ABTA ABTA No. V4744

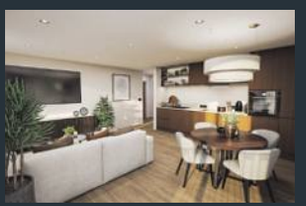
BuyAssociation GetGround

Piccadilly Wharf

Manchester

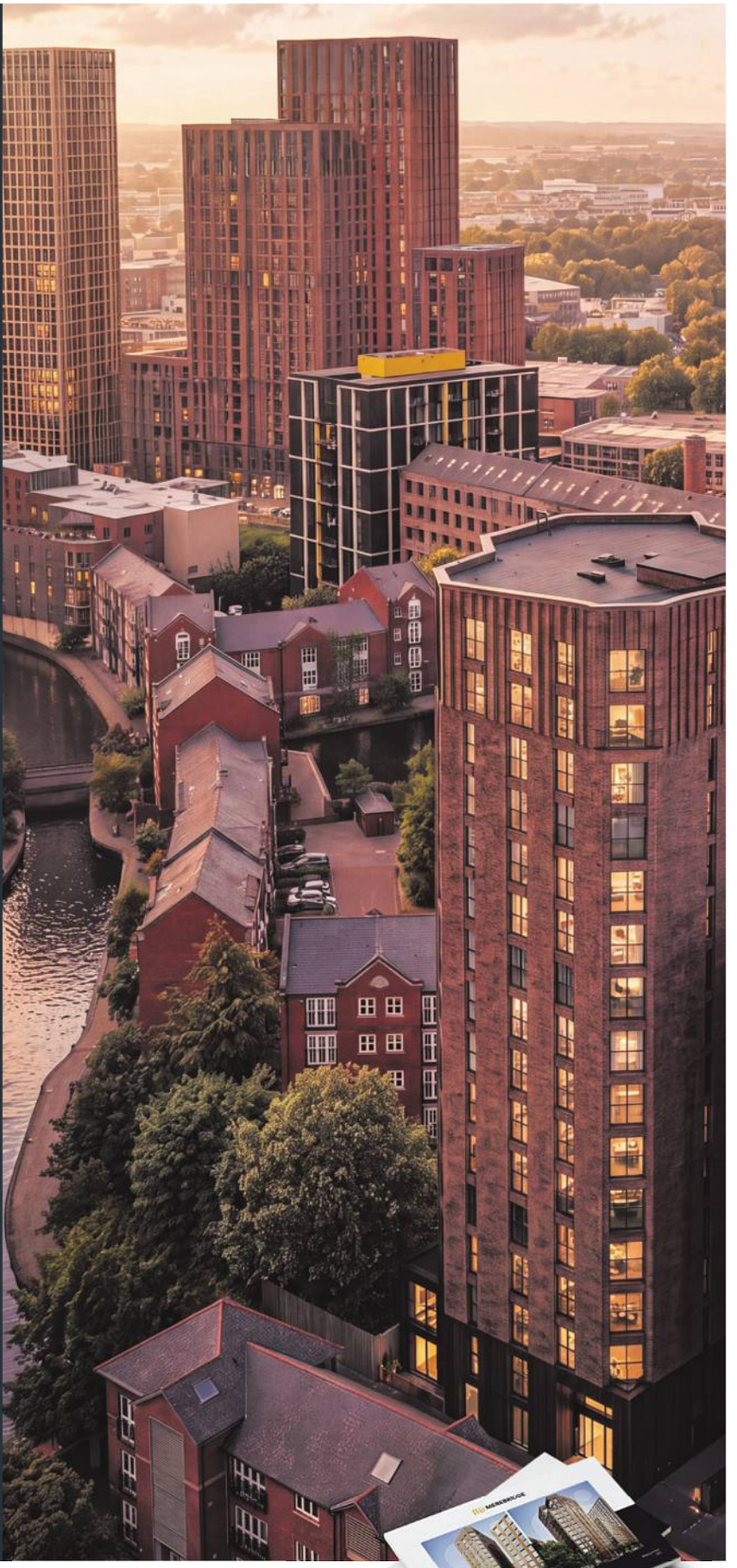
Invest in Manchester, the UK's fastest-growing city economy*

Located just a 6-minute walk from the upcoming Manchester Digital Campus—the confirmed home of 'No. 10 North'. Benefit from 8,800 incoming government roles, driving significant, long-term rental demand right on your doorstep.



Apartments from £302,000

- **Location:** Canalside in the regeneration zone next to the £1.5bn Mayfield development, 3 minutes from Piccadilly mainline station.
- **Property Details:** 72 boutique apartments featuring a 24-hour concierge. Unlock limited-time launch prices and tailored payment plans direct from the developer.
- **Market Demand:**** Demand currently outstrips supply by 5:1, and properties are let in under 48 hours, with 17% rental forecast growth to 2029 (JLL).



For more information and to request your free brochure, scan the QR code

0800 316 7344

The value of investments can go up and down, and BuyAssociation always recommends that you should seek independent financial advice. *EY city-region economy; eight in ten FTSE 100 present. **JLL forecasts 17% rental growth to 2029 on top of roughly 33% house-price growth over five years.

MEREBRIDGE

Television & Radio

Your seven-day guide to film, streaming and more

September 12-18

TV column Page 21 / **Streaming** Pages 22-24
Best sport Page 25/ **Film guide** Pages 26-27
TV listings Pages 28-41 / **Radio** Pages 42-43

Return to Slough House

Slow Horses

Jack Lowden and Gary Oldman are back for a sixth series of the acclaimed spy saga
From Wednesday, Apple TV

Best of the week

DRAMA

1 All Creatures Great and Small

Back to the Dales for more gentle drama with James Herriot and his fellow vets
Thursday, 5, 9pm

DOCUMENTARY

2 70 Up

The 63-year-long reality TV experiment finally reaches its conclusion
Tuesday, ITV1, 9pm

STREAMING

3 MobLand

Pierce Brosnan, Helen Mirren and Tom Hardy are back in the hit gangster drama
Available Friday, Paramount+

PODCAST

4 Close Readings

A series devoted to discussing poems – Keats, Milton, Browning and more
James Marriott, p25

SPORT

5 World Athletics Ultimate Championship

Keely Hodgkinson and Josh Kerr are among those competing this weekend
Saturday/Sunday, BBC2/BBC1, from 5pm

TV Talk

By Ben Dowell

Good news for Line of Duty fans

The next series of Jed Mercurio's police corruption drama starring Adrian Dunbar, Vicky McClure and Martin Compston, *below*, has been filmed and is in the editing stage, so it could be coming soon. We know that it focuses on sexual misconduct within the ranks and stars Robert Carlyle as the "gruff loner" and marksman DC Shaun Massie, and the BBC may want to showcase it in the New Year's Day slot, which would get the year off to a rollicking start. Chances are that the new series of *The Traitors* may launch that night as well, which would make a good fit: a whole night of duplicity before we've broken our 2027 resolutions.

The new-look Bake Off

One treat we can definitely enjoy much sooner is the return of *The Great British Bake Off*, back on Channel 4 on September 22. It's now graced by Nigella Lawson, who has been dubbed the queen of the show by Paul Hollywood (his other co-judges Mary Berry and Prue Leith were mere dames). There is another twist to the programme: freshened-up credits. The sweet little fair-haired girl seen in the opening for the past 16 years has been retired and replaced by a child with darker hair. Is this a subtle nod to the raven-haired new presenter? Apparently not. "No subliminal messaging was used in the making of the new title sequence," I am told.

Sarah Waters back on the Beeb

Sarah Waters's novels *Tipping the Velvet*, *Fingersmith* and *The Night Watch* have made for great TV, so it's no surprise that BBC Studios is developing her 2014 hit *The Paying Guests*, a Twenties-set tale of clandestine lesbian passion and murder involving a landlady and her lodgers.

Small Prophets come out of the jar again

There's good news for Mackenzie Crook, whose fantastic comedy *Small Prophets* is returning for another six-part run. Crook's tale of Pearce Quigley's Michael — an affable worker at a large hardware store in the northwest who discovers from his dad (Michael Palin's Brian) how to grow prophesying, truth-telling homunculi in glass jars — should start filming soon for broadcast next year. This year Crook told me his aim is a three-series arc for the whole story. And when Crook foretells such things it will, as with anything the Prophets say, come to pass.

tvtalk@thetimes.co.uk

Don't keep them to yourself, share your favourite hidden gems (and those shows to avoid)

I'm absolutely loving the third — and final — series of *Colin from Accounts* [BBC2/iPlayer]. You need to watch it from the very start, and it can be a bit on the crude side at times, but the central couple of Ash and Gordon are believable and amusing. **Helen Jones**

I loved *The Gentlemen* [Netflix], looking away every now and then — it's pretty gory. I think Vinnie Jones as Geoff is great. I never once thought of him as a footballer in a previous life. Beautifully shot too, especially in Italy. **Elizabeth Taylor**

I share Carol Midgley's regret in her TV column that *Holby City* was axed [Review, Sep 5]. It was all due to a lack of money apparently. That said, we have one kind of *MasterChef* after another, plus *Great British Menu*, plus Mary Berry, plus all kinds of other foodie shows. Why is *Casualty* the only medical staple now available, given that health is a matter that should concern us all? **Alexander Hall**

Disappointing coverage of the Burghley Horse Trials: no dressage clips, no mention of the final trot-up and way too much waffle! Rishi Persad was excellent as usual, but I just felt that he had to "fill" too much. **Sue Dilworth**

I love Louise Lear's theatrics when reading the weather forecast on the BBC News. She'd make a wonderful Lady Macbeth. **Glyn Thomas**

Tom Hardy as Harry da Souza in MobLand

my top ten

Tom Hardy roles

James Jackson ranks the actor's best performances as MobLand returns. And there's no room for Bane...

Let us know your suggestions at tvtalk@thetimes.co.uk

10 Alfie Solomons in Peaky Blinders (2014-22)

A prime example of Hardy stealing scenes while in a supporting role (see also *Inception* and *The Revenant*). Amping it up somewhat, he puts a typically offbeat Hardy spin on this erratic Jewish mob boss who says the f-word a lot between getting in some of the best lines: "It smells of pig round here, dunnit? Definitely not kosher." *iPlayer/Netflix/Sky*

9 Johnny Davis in The Bikeriders (2024)

This film about the lives of a motorbike club in a pre-drugs 1960s divided opinion, but Hardy's portrait of the leader of the Vandals is interesting: a blue-collar family man who experienced an epiphany while watching *The Wild One*. So when Hardy does his mumbly Brando act here, it makes sense. Johnny's tough charisma belies a more complex melancholy. *Prime Video*

8 Max Rockatansky in Mad Max: Fury Road (2015)

It's hard to think of many stars who could step so assuredly into Mel Gibson's boots as Max Rockatansky in this reboot. In a performance of few words, Hardy is at his most handsome and animalistic as the road warrior — "a cauldron of neurosis", as the actor put it — even if he is rather eclipsed by Charlize Theron's wow factor as Furiosa. *HBO Max*

7 Ricki Tarr in Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (2011)

Inhabiting any of the spies of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* — so inscrutable or slippery — would be a challenge for any actor. Ricki Tarr is no exception. Except he differs from the others, not just because he's a roving field agent rather than a Circus snake in London, but because he's a more romantic figure — rescuing Irina from an abusive husband. He shows no awe opposite Gary Oldman during their pivotal tête-à-tête, despite Oldman being his acting hero. *StudioCanal/rent*

6 Ronnie and Reggie Kray in Legend (2015)

Two Tom Hardys for the price of one — as the suave Reggie Kray and off-his-rocker Ronnie Kray. By the wonders of CGI and great acting, both his Brylcreemed Krays are often in the same frame and you're never in doubt who's who. It's the bespectacled Ronnie who is the most alarming — spittle dripping from his mouth as he riles himself up for another vicious display. *Studio Canal/rent*

Hardy in Mad Max: Fury Road

5 Harry da Souza in MobLand (2025-)

Dropping any trace of the Brando shtick in favour of a more refined diction, Hardy plays Harry, the henchman for the fearsome Harrigan clan, led by Helen Mirren and Pierce Brosnan. Watching Harry calmly reduce hostile alpha-thugs to jelly by dint of his sheer toughness is never less than compelling, no showboating necessary. *Paramount+/Prime Video*

4 James Delaney in Taboo (2017)

Hardy has never put his grunting, mumbling side to better effect than in Steven Knight's BBC series, set in 1814 London. Playing a glowering adventurer bumping heads with the East India Company, he looms about the filthy streets looking like he might disembowel someone at any moment. A second series is planned, but there's still no sign of it. *iPlayer/Sky/Netflix*

3 Stuart Shorter in Stuart: A Life Backwards (2007)

Hardy has been open about how he went off the rails in his early twenties, a period that informed his performance as Stuart Shorter, a homeless, alcoholic heroin addict, in this feature-length BBC2 drama. It tells the unusual friendship between Shorter and a middle-class do-gooder played by Benedict Cumberbatch. Presently unavailable, the film is an ultimately heartbreaking portrait of a person destroyed by a life of suffering.

2 Michael Peterson in Bronson (2008)

With crazed eyes, hulked-up physique, bald head and neat twirly moustache, Hardy is never less than wholly convincing as an ultraviolent prisoner. As much as his clenching fists look capable of terrible things, his flights of fantasy as a clown-comedian on stage reek of mad volatility. You can't tear your eyes off this horrifying tour de force. *ITVX/Prime Video/Disney+*

1 Ivan Locke in Locke (2013)

In soft-spoken contrast to Bronson's wildness was Hardy's family man Ivan Locke, on a lone nocturnal drive to be present at the birth of his child, the result of a lone indiscretion. It's a one-man drama driven by his series of phone conversations (Olivia Colman, Ruth Wilson, Tom Holland among the voices) and in real time you watch one man's life disintegrate. Hardy is simply mesmerising throughout. *YouTube/Lionsgate/rent*

Carol Midgley on TV

I devoured the best sitcom in five years like a greedy pig

The superb Colin from Accounts has signed off and left us wanting more — if only every show did the same (I'm looking at you, Handmaid's Tale)

Colin from Accounts
BBC2/iPlayer

Harriet Dyer and Patrick Brammall in Colin from Accounts. Below: Rob Delaney and Sharon Horgan in Catastrophe

I am suffering from a bad case of PSD this week. No, not psychosexual disorder — I'm far too boring for that. I refer to "post-series depression", the bereftness you feel when you finish a book or a TV series you love, a sensation apparently also known as "looseleft".

Why did I binge all eight episodes of the new series of *Colin from Accounts* in one go like a gluttonous pig? Why do I have no self-control? They have all gone now, like a Christmas selection box scoffed in less than four hours. I bet many of you have stuffed yourselves on it too. But we have shot ourselves in the foot because, as you will have read in The Times last week, there will be no more where that came from. That's all, folks.

Patrick Brammall and Harriet Dyer, the writers and stars of *Colin from Accounts* — the best comedy of the past five years, and not just because its hero is a disabled border terrier on wheels — have decided to end it at three series. And while that is terrible news because this third series is exquisite and very, very funny (more on that later), their decision is astute. Leaving the audience wanting more is how TV series shore up their status among the greats.

If you'll forgive a cheap metaphor, what's the point in continuing to grind away after you've passed the peak and your punter is losing interest and going through the motions? *Catastrophe*, the genially brutal and brilliant anti-rom-com starring Sharon Horgan and Rob Delaney as a couple who get together after she becomes pregnant from their one-night stand, drew the line at four series. So did the outstanding political satire *The Thick of It*. *The Office* (the original version) bowed out at two series (the US version went on for nine, which some think was too many), as did *Fleabag*, giving them both a sort of lasting cult status. Many words have been written about there being only two series of *Fawlty Towers* — half a century later it consistently tops "the best comedy of all time" polls (and deservedly so).

Let's consider some of those shows that did indeed keep on pounding long after they should have got up, got dressed and gone home. *Modern Family* was a great American comedy for many years, but kept churning out increasingly less funny material for 11 series, when, in my opinion, it should have read the room and quit at about the six mark.

Don't even get me started on *The Handmaid's Tale*. There is a strong argument that it should have bowed out after the first series — the proper, brilliant, jaw-dropping one that was based on the entirety of Margaret Atwood's novel. I certainly think two or three should have been the maximum, but on and on it staggered miserably for six, becoming repetitive, almost gleeful torture porn — a groundhog day of women being burnt and hanged, having their tongues cut out, no hope, no light. Enjoy! There were 66 episodes and I had zero interest in watching about half of them.

What about *Homeland*? This was stellar television in the early days, a superb run, but one that pretty much ended for me at the close of series three, when Damian Lewis's character, Nicholas Brody, was hoisted by his neck from a crane in Iran and it was bye-bye to him. It lurched on for five more series, delivering plots that became as implausible and labyrinthine as they were uninteresting. Knowing when enough is enough is a skill.

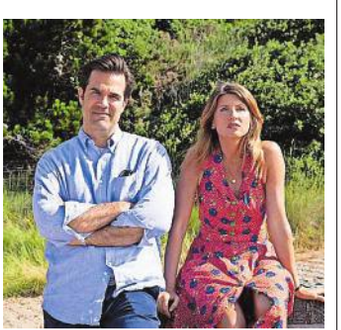
You could argue that exceptions to this rule include *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (12 series) and *Only Fools and Horses* (seven series), but *Curb* had its weaker series, and even David Jason admitted that *Only Fools* went on too long. *Mrs Brown's Boys* has had five series and more than 15 Christmas specials. I'll just leave that with you.

Anyway, back to *Colin from Accounts* and why it was (is) so good that we must savour it while we can. First, it is about 80 per cent funnier than most comedies and seems to achieve this almost effortlessly, although I can well imagine how much work has gone into it. It wears its cheerful genius extremely lightly. It manages to be a will they, won't they rom-com without resorting to cheesy schmaltz. Comedy trumps romance every time.

The world the series has created feels like one I would like to live in, where everything isn't sad and dangerous. It is a nice, cringey and sometimes shit world in a recognisably normal way. Yes, all the characters are flawed (some hilariously so, such as Lee the pervert) and, yes, they can all be annoying at times. But you like them because it is brimming with warmth, optimism and humanity. Unlike so many modern comedies it doesn't cleave to darkness.

For those who don't know, it is about a couple, Ashley and Gordon, who meet when he accidentally cripples a dog by hitting it with his car after she flashes her nipple at him. They take Colin to the vet (the vet is a great character) and co-parent him when he needs wheels for back legs (FYI, Colin the dog is called Zak in real life and is not disabled).

Its romantic leads are married in real life, so the chemistry positively fizzes.



The genially brutal anti-rom-com Catastrophe drew the line at four series

You get a strong sense that, despite the age gap they kept going on about in series one, these are two people who *should* be together (which bodes well for their marriage, I suppose).

Series two ended with Gordon proposing to Ashley at someone else's wedding and Ashley rejecting him. The third series begins three years after that moment — the proposal had caused them to split up, leaving Gordon broken. He makes an appointment for an insurance medical and, unbeknown to him, one of the new GPs is Ashley. This first scene of the series should be studied by comedy writers as a perfect exemplar of comic timing, reveal and originality. The medical questionnaire read out by an intern requires Gordon to list his sexual interactions in front of Ashley — "insertive anal, insertive oral, insertive vaginal, insertive penile, receptive anal" and many more. It is brilliant, cringe-making TV worthy of *The Office*. There's another scene in the same GP's surgery when a bowels-obsessed elderly man brings in his stool wrapped in paper.

It's a series that loves to mine life's domestic humiliations for laughs, using Gordon's co-workers at the brewery, Chiara and Brett, and Ashley's ghastly narcissistic mother, Lynelle, to brilliant effect. Every character, minor or major, is sharply drawn, such as Ashley's nice but dim new boyfriend David and Gordon's bright but appallingly pushy new girlfriend Chelsea. There is no weak link. I don't think Ashley would have gone three years without checking on Colin's welfare though. Just saying.

It is wonderful TV with a funeral scene later on that is utterly outrageous and so funny. Clearly it's annoying that this is the last we will get of *Colin from Accounts*, but hats off to them for having the confidence and classiness to retire at their peak and not keep milking the golden teat.

Streaming

From iPlayer to Netflix — best new shows and hidden gems

Magdalena Cielecka, Jacek Braciak and Sandra Drzymalska

Netflix

The Doll
Available Wednesday

A lavish new adaptation of a 19th-century novel

This six-part Polish adaptation of Boleslaw Prus's 19th-century novel of unrequited love, war and society in decline has been a subject of much discussion. That's partly due to its coming out at the same time as a feature-length adaptation. Word of mouth appears to be favouring this version. It looks stunning, and with the Breslau Murders star Tomasz Schuchardt as the self-made, self-destructive Wokulski and Sandra Drzymalska as the beautiful, scheming Izabela, object of his desire, it's poised to be a standout literary adaptation. **Andrew Male**

Ella Beatty plays Lizzie Borden in Monster

Monster: The Lizzie Borden Story
Available Thursday
Series return

This fourth instalment of Ryan Murphy and Ian Brennan's anthology series about real-life killers retells the story surrounding the 1892 axe murders of Andrew and Abby Borden in Fall River, Massachusetts, and the trial that followed, which ended in the acquittal of daughter Lizzie. The cast is amazing, with Ella Beatty as Lizzie, Charlie Hunnam and Rebecca Hall as Andrew and Abby and Vicky Krieps as the family's live-in maid. It's a sensationalist retelling.

Stranger Things: Tales from '85
Available Thursday
Series return

It made perfect sense to revive the Duffer brothers' sci-fi coming-of-age drama as an animated adventure. That way, Mike, Will, Lucas, Dustin, Max and Eleven will never get old. Skewed more family friendly, season one looked great, but lacked the wit of the original. Hopefully season two, with more paranormal threats emerging from the abandoned silver mines of Hawkins, Indiana, and a new character in the shape of pink-mohicaned punk Nikki Baxter, will address those issues.

Eleven in Stranger Things: Tales from '85

Claire Foy in the biographical drama H is for Hawk

FILM: H is for Hawk
12A, 2025
Available now
Best film

Claire Foy is the focus of this thoughtful adaptation of Helen Macdonald's bestselling grief memoir. Set mostly in 2007, it follows the Cambridge research fellow Macdonald (Foy), as she reacts to the sudden death of her beloved father by adopting a goshawk. The subsequent drama describes the growing bond between Macdonald and the fierce bird, named Mabel, and eventually suggests that Mabel has become a vehicle, and sometimes a substitute, for Macdonald's grief. (120min)

The Perfect Lie
Available now

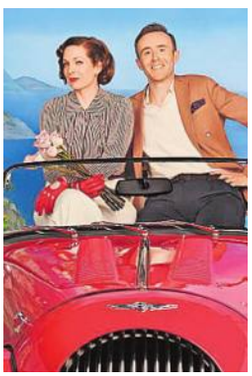
Based on Saskia Noort's bestselling 2004 novel *The Dinner Club*, this seven-part Dutch psychological thriller taps into suburban hedonism. Told in flashback in the form of a police statement by a young mother, Karen (Loes Haverkort), it is a stylish erotic drama about wealth and enviable lifestyles unravelling. The directors Dana Nechushtan and Margien Rogaar walk a tense, stylish line between Harlan Coben thrillers (wealthy gated community with secrets) and M Night Shyamalan horror (how dark are these secrets?).

Dutch psychological thriller The Perfect Lie

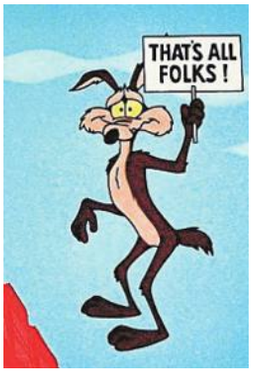
Now

Much Ado About Nothing
Available now

Simon Godwin's hit 2022 revival of Shakespeare's battle of wits between Benedick and Beatrice, unfurled against a backdrop of 1930s Mediterranean chic, was shown on Sky Arts in May as part of the National Theatre Live strand. John Heffernan and Katherine Parkinson make for a charming pair of slightly bruised lovers. Parkinson — better known for her TV roles in *The IT Crowd* and *Here We Go* — is thoroughly at home with the production's broad comic thrusts, while Heffernan gets laughter out of the most modest of lines.



Katherine Parkinson and John Heffernan star



Classic animation with the hapless Wile E Coyote

YouTube

Looney Tunes
Channel time

You would think it was something they'd want to trumpet about, after the smash-hit success of *Coyote Vs Acme*, but the Warner Bros Classics YouTube channel has hours upon hours of classic Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Coyote and Roadrunner cartoons streaming for free. Highlights include the 50 minutes' worth of showdowns between Bugs and cowboy adversary Yosemite Sam and 30 minutes that is nothing but the adventures of the cult alien favourite Marvin the Martian. If that doesn't satisfy, there are also hours of golden-era Tom and Jerry cartoons.

Paramount+

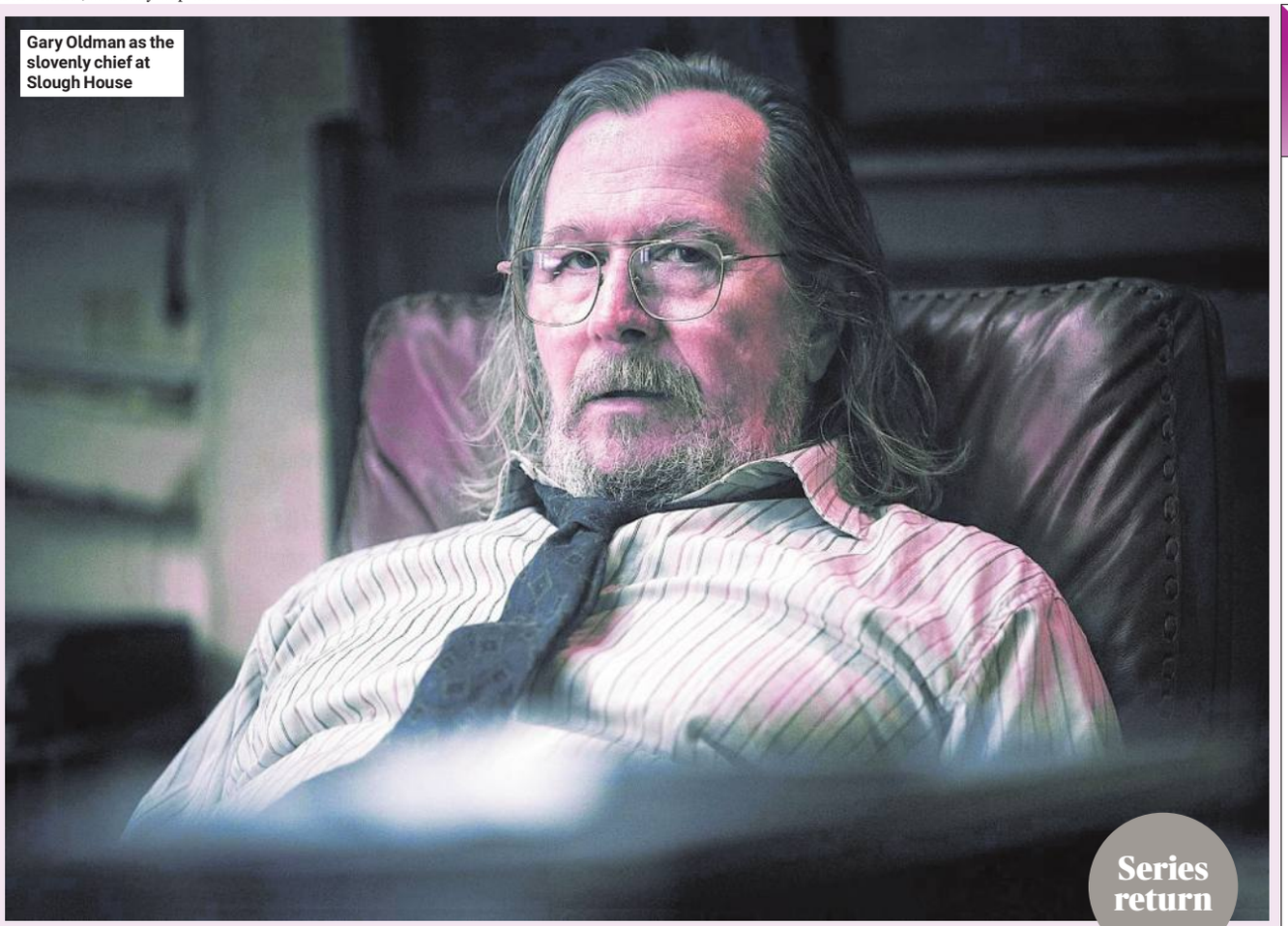
Helen Mirren and Pierce Brosnan in season two of Mobland

Mobland
Available Friday
Series return

Guy Ritchie's riotous gangster drama returns with the subtlety of a bullet to the face as Harry Da Souza (Tom Hardy) sorts a season opening problem for the Harrigans, all exhausted swagger and blasting firearms before the credit sequence even begins. The cast is extraordinary by any measure, patriarch Conrad (Pierce Brosnan) and his Lady Macbeth wife Maeve (Helen Mirren) bring chaotic energy and fading beauty, but the real excitement comes from Hardy as Harry dancing across the lead writer Jez Butterworth's lines with menacing flourish.

FILM: World Trade Center
12A, 2006
Available now

The aim of Oliver Stone's 9/11 film is to celebrate selflessness and extraordinary bravery on a day that will be for ever associated with unimaginable evil. Based on the accounts of survivors of the disaster, *World Trade Center* is the story of the ordinary men and women in the emergency services: policemen, firemen (including Nicolas Cage), paramedics and a courageous former marine. Stone puts his characters, and his camera, on the inside of the tower, evoking with a horrible clarity the few seconds it took to turn a building into a mass of tortured metal. (129min)



Gary Oldman as the slovenly chief at Slough House

Series return

Apple TV

Slow Horses
Available Wednesday

A welcome return for Oldman's Jackson Lamb

Season six of Mick Herron's stylishly grubby world of espionage begins with the return of a long-gone Slow Horse — but best not get too attached to him. He's not the only figure making a comeback: Hugo Weaving, Samuel West, Rosalind Eleazar and Olivia Cooke are also thrown back into the fray — as Jackson Lamb (the enduringly great Gary Oldman) realises that his bunch of supposedly hopeless intelligence operatives, past and present, are under attack. Driven by themes of grief, family, respect and tradition, this season doesn't start in the flashiest fashion, yet it still burns bright. **Victoria Segal**

FILM: Mayday 12A, 2026
Available now

John Wick, watch out! Kenneth Branagh, Rada's finest ass-kicker, is about, playing an ex-KGB agent, Nikolai Ustinov, in a spy farce. The setting is Russia in 1987 and the bearish Ustinov is a wilderness man, disillusioned with Soviet politics and obsessed with American pop culture — especially *Top Gun*. When the ace US fighter pilot Troy Kelly (Ryan Reynolds) crash-lands in a nearby forest and convinces Ustinov to defect, the stage is set for a race to the border — and for fights. Lots of fights. Branagh is a natural action brawler and dazzles in several bone-crunching set pieces. (111min)

The Velvet Underground
Available now

This is a slick if not exactly radical documentary about the band who epitomised the sullen rebellion of subcultural New York in the 1960s. Haynes has a feel for the Velvet Underground's music — *Venus in Furs* and *Heroin* are thrillingly employed — and works in split screen, placing vintage footage alongside talking heads and graphics. Not revolutionary, perhaps, but an apt way to frame a band whose multimedia approach was cutting-edge at the time. The understated star of this show is not spiky Lou Reed, but John Cale, the Welshman whose hypnotic drone underpinned Reed's lyrics.

ITVX

Round the Twist
Available now

Retro classic

A one-time beloved fixture on BBC kids TV, this 1990s Australian supernatural comedy drama about widowed dad Tony Twist (Richard Moir for the first two seasons, succeeded by Andrew Gilbert for the final two) and his three kids living in a haunted lighthouse has aged incredibly well. That's largely down to the strength of the original source material and the weird short stories of Paul Jennings, but also because it fully understands the after-school audience and its love of ghosts, dragons and jokes about farts and magical underpants.

Richard Moir, centre, stars in comedy drama Round the Twist

Kevin Can F* Himself**
Available Sunday

Valerie Armstrong's comedy drama premiered in 2021, in the wave of post #MeToo TV. A brilliant exercise in genre subversion, the series starred Annie Murphy as Allison McRoberts, a woman trapped in an abusive marriage to "regular guy" Kevin (Eric Petersen). While her private world was shot in the manner of a prestige drama, whenever the oafish Kevin appeared her world transformed into a nightmarishly bright multiple-camera sitcom. This is a brutal and innovative critique of the sitcom-wife archetype and a gripping crime drama.

FILM: Words of War 15, 2025
Available now

A muscular cast lifts this political biopic above its limitations. This is the true-life tale of the brave Russian investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who was a Putin critic and in 2006 was assassinated in her Moscow apartment building. Politkovskaya is played with typically fearsome integrity by Maxine Peake, charting the journalist's coverage of the Second Chechen War and her increasingly strident attacks on Putin. Her concerned husband is played by Jason Isaacs, her editor by Ciarán Hinds and her nemesis from the secret police by Ian Hart. (117min)

more streaming next page ▶

Channel 4

The Twelve
Available now

Series return

If you enjoyed the Australian spin-off with Sam Neill then check out this Walter Presents Belgian original. The third season of this courtroom drama finds a new jury of men and women asked to decide who murdered a world-famous author and his pregnant wife at their gender reveal party. It's subtitled *The Botox Murders* — if you are wondering what the murder weapon was, it's concealed in those blue and pink cannons. As with the previous two seasons, the jury are dealing with their own dramas, just as knotty as the one unfolding in the courtroom.

Season three of The Twelve, subtitled The Botox Murders

The Armando Iannucci Show
Available now

This expert mix of sketches and confessional to-camera monologues, in which the satirist laid bare his existential dread and social inadequacies, experienced a muted reception, debuting days before 9/11 and having its episode order disrupted owing to "terrorism" references. It hasn't received the adulation and praise it deserves. Yet it's aged magnificently, capturing the awkwardness of social situations and mundane horrors of modern life. Iannucci's other absurdist comedy sketch-show, the also wonderful *Time Trumpet*, is streaming on YouTube.

FILM: Carol 15, 2015
Available now

Here is a lesson on the secrets of seduction from Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara in an exquisite film by Todd Haynes. Set in New York in the 1950s, *Carol* concerns the forbidden love between two women: the aspiring photographer Therese Belivet (Mara) and the sophisticated housewife and mother Carol Aird (Blanchett). Precisely because their passion is unimaginable for those around them, we are soon complicit in their secret code. (119min)

● Previews by Andrew Male, Joe Clay, James Jackson, Ben Dowell, Victoria Segal

Former Goodie Bill Oddie birdwatching in a field in 1982

Best nature

Prime Video

Neagley
Available Wednesday

New series

It's testament to Maria Sten's brilliance that this support character from the *Reacher* franchise now has her own show. As the former US army master sergeant turned Chicago PI, Sten, below, is a perfect foil to Alan Ritchson's deadpan lead, bringing vulnerability and wiry fitness to the role. That this series doesn't quite work yet has nothing to do with Sten, but more the ridiculous supervillain that Neagley has been pitted against. That's one element not lifted from the original novels, and it shows.

Maria Sten stars in the Reacher spin-off Neagley

FILM: The Runner 15, 2026
Available now

New film

Kevin Macdonald's frenetic thriller stars Gal Gadot as Maia, a successful lawyer and mum to a diabetic son. She is preparing for a day in court, where she is on the team prosecuting the crime boss Tommy Boyd, when she gets a call from a mysterious man (known only as "The Caller" and played by Damian Lewis). He works for Boyd and reveals that he has kidnapped her son and placed him in a diabetic coma. She has just one hour to sprint across London to murder a key witness in Boyd's trial or her son will die. It's *Speed* on legs. (84min)

The Fitbit Killer
Available Tuesday

The title is somewhat misleading. No one was strangled or choked with the popular activity monitor. No, this is the story of the Connecticut computer network administrator Richard Dabate who, in 2015, murdered his wife, Connie, and pretended she had been killed by a violent intruder. How did they know he was lying? Well, Connie's Fitbit had tracked all her movements the morning of the murder.... As so often with these documentaries, the thrill of the procedural is undermined by the bleakness of the real-life domestic narrative.

iPlayer

Birding with Bill Oddie
Available now

Remembering a beloved birder

In watching this nearly 30-year-old series you are reminded of two things. Namely, what a wonderful TV presenter and educator Bill Oddie was, and also how freewheeling and unscripted celebrity documentaries used to be in the late 1990s. As such, the six available episodes on iPlayer (there are another 12 still to emerge) are a delight. Oddie's style is cosy and familiar and he wears his knowledge lightly. If you mourned the former Goodie's passing after his death in July then this is the perfect way to remember him: happy, excited and delightfully enthusiastic. **Andrew Male**

Blue Lights
Available now

Blue Lights is one of the best cop shows of recent years and it is returning later on this autumn for a fourth series. In a crowded landscape of weary police procedurals, Declan Lawn and Adam Patterson's Belfast drama eschews slick formulas for raw, grounded humanity. Following probationary officers navigating complex post-Troubles territory, the writing delivers breathtaking tension alongside dry Northern Irish humour in a show that triumphantly prioritises character above spectacle. The first three series are available to watch on iPlayer now.

FILM: Laura U, 1944
Available now

Featuring the exquisite Gene Tierney, a cocky Vincent Price and a delicious switcheroo halfway through, Otto Preminger's American breakthrough is an immaculate film noir. The Austrian-Hungarian cooks with familiar ingredients in this tale of the murder of Tierney's New York It girl, but adds unexpected seasoning. Dana Andrews seems to be a detective from central casting, yet there's something rum about his fascination with his suspects' amorous adventures. The star is Clifton Webb as a supercilious journalist and creepy suitor of Laura. (88min)

Disney+

City of Blood
Available Wednesday

New series

In a future Berlin ravaged by climate collapse a privileged elite live beneath a secure dome; while everyone else struggles for survival outside, battling extreme heat, corruption and crime. Based on the Berlinoir German graphic novel by Reinhard Kleist and Tobias O Meissner, this eight-part dystopian thriller can't help but seem a little overfamiliar until you discover that the moneyed elite are under attack from an organised crime-network of vampires, with blood functioning as the city's true currency.

Soma Pysall and Fran Hartwig star in City of Blood

Sugarcane
Available now

This documentary begins with the 2021 discovery of unmarked graves in the grounds of Saint Joseph's Indian Residential School in British Columbia. From there, the story the directors uncover is a significant one, concerning the abuse of indigenous children at Catholic-run residential schools. The film won awards in the US and Canada, but has received far less attention in the UK. That's a shame as it is a masterclass in journalistic reporting and an object lesson in how to interview survivors of trauma with compassion and respect.

Big Sky
Available now

"You kill it, we grill it" reads the sign outside the diner in Helena, Montana. Created by David E Kelley and based on CJ Box's novel *The Highway, Big Sky* (three seasons, 2020-23) travels in convoy with small-town crime dramas that rely on close-knit communities and striking scenery for plot enhancement. It begins with a love triangle between private investigators Cassie Dewell (Kylie Bunbury), Cody Hoyt (Ryan Phillippe) and Cody's estranged wife Jenny (Katheryn Winnick), but stretches into a case involving dis_appearing girls and sinister truck drivers.

The best of the rest

Tubi

Hell on Wheels
Available now

Hidden gem

If you were to rank the great modern TV westerns, *Deadwood* would surely come out top. But where might we place this much-maligned tale of the Union Pacific Railroad and the outlaws, criminals and migrants who helped to build it? Devised by Joe and Tony Gayton, and starring Anson Mount as ex-Confederate cavalry Colonel Cullen Bohannon, *Hell on Wheels* is ultimately a show without heroes, one that was never as beautifully written or performed as *Deadwood* — but one that excelled at revealing the evil, ruthlessness and venality that built the West.

Anson Mount in the gritty western Hell on Wheels

Shudder

The Creep Tapes
Available Tuesday

Series return

After a magnificently unsettling season two, the serial killer anthology series returns with high expectations to meet. In this third season, serial killer "Peachfuzz", has hired a new videographer (Rekha Shankar) and is ready to confess all. Or is he? An expert balance of jump scares, genre critiques and insights into the psychology of the modern narcissist, fans of recent low-budget horror triumphs such as *Backrooms* and *Obsession* will find similar narrative disquiet here.

Pay-for film

Tuner 15, 2025
Available on Sky Store, Prime Video and more

In this crime yarn, British stars Leo Woodall (*The White Lotus*; *One Day*) excels as a piano tuner with hyper-sensitive hearing — and Dustin Hoffman is also excellent as his mentor.

Familiar Touch 12, 2024
Available on Sky Store, Prime Video and more

An intimate drama about an elderly woman suffering from dementia, moved to assisted living. There she needs to deal with different people, routines and environments while her identity transforms.

Sport The best live viewing

Can Tottenham get their first win?

Having finished 17th two seasons on the trot, Spurs opted to spend big in the summer with an outlay of about £400 million, yet they sit 18th and are yet to score a goal. Which makes this home game pivotal. Roberto De Zerbi's team need to perk up radically. Everton by contrast suffered a miserable transfer window, but showed spirit with a late goal to draw with Manchester United last Sunday. **Alyson Rudd**

Premier League: Tottenham v Everton
Today, Sky Main Event, 5.30pm

SATURDAY 12

Live WSL: West Ham United v London City Lionesses
Sky Premier League, 12.45pm
The Women's Super League match from Chigwell Construction Stadium.

Live US Open Tennis
Sky Main Event, 8pm
Coverage of the women's final at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, New York.

Live Premier League: Sunderland v Arsenal
TNT Sports 1, 8pm
Coverage of the top-flight match from Stadium of Light.

Live International Rugby Union: South Africa v New Zealand
Sky Sports+, 10pm
The final Test in the four-match series, which takes place at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, USA.

SUNDAY 13

Live WSL: Manchester United v Chelsea
Sky Sports+, noon
The match from The Progress with Unity Stadium in Leigh.

Live Formula 1: The Spanish Grand Prix
Sky Sports F1, 2pm
Coverage of the 14th round of the season at Circuito de Madring in Madrid.

Live Premier League: Man United v Man City
Sky Main Event, 4.30pm
The match from Old Trafford, as the two local rivals go head to head. Also today Coventry City take on Brighton & Hove Albion at the CBS Arena (Sky Premier League, 2pm).

Live US Open Tennis
Sky Main Event, 7pm
The men's final in Flushing Meadows, New York.

MONDAY 14

Live Premier League: Leeds United v Newcastle United
Sky Main Event, 8pm
Coverage of the match from Elland Road.

Live NFL: Kansas City Chiefs v Denver Broncos
Sky Main Event, 1am
Coverage of the week one match from Arrowhead Stadium, as the AFC West rivals face each other in a divisional contest.

TUESDAY 15

Live International T20 Cricket: England v Sri Lanka
Sky Cricket, 6pm
Coverage of the first T20 in the three-match series from Utilita Bowl in Southampton.

EFL Cup Live: Liverpool v Tottenham Hotspur
ITV4, 8pm
All the action from the third-round tie at Anfield. Ipswich Town v Arsenal from Portman Road is on Sky Sports+ (8pm).

LCL's Alexia Putellas (Sat, Sky Premier League, 12.45pm)

WEDNESDAY 16

EFL Cup Live: Man United v Brighton & Hove Albion
ITV1, 8pm
Mark Pougatch presents all the action from the third-round tie at Old Trafford.

Live UEFA Europa League
TNT Sports 1/2/3/4, 8pm
Coverage of league phase matches, including Sunderland v AZ Alkmaar and AC Milan v Benfica.

THURSDAY 17

Darts: World Series Finals
ITV4, 6pm
Coverage from AFAS Live in Amsterdam, featuring the opening first-round matches.

Live Europa League
TNT Sports 1/2/3/4, 8pm
Coverage of league phase matches, including Celtic v Ferencvaros, Real Sociedad v Bournemouth and Crystal Palace v Lech Poznan.

FRIDAY 18

Live WSL: Manchester City v Liverpool
Sky Sports+, 7pm
Coverage of the Women's Super League match from Joie Stadium.

Live Premier League: Brentford v Chelsea
Sky Main Event, 8pm
Coverage of the west London derby from Gtech Community Stadium.

Podcasts

A poetry show so good it even made me want to read Robert Browning

James Marriott discovers the perfect antidote to the glut of true crime

Close Readings
Available on Spotify, Apple and more

Reviewing podcasts every week for the better part of a decade could make you pretty jaded about the medium. I have to screw up all my frayed and wearied courage before pressing play on the latest ghoulish true-crime offering or overhyped series about a scam-artist boyfriend. But there is one thing I still look forward to with unfaded anticipation. Every month there is a new episode of Seamus Perry and Mark Ford's podcast about poetry. Perry is the master of Balliol College, Oxford; Ford is a professor of English at UCL. Both are great critics and, as their podcast *Close Readings* has gradually been revealing, really great broadcasters. Each episode is devoted to a discussion of one or two classic poems.

This is the sort of thing that once upon a time would probably have been broadcast to the nation on BBC2 after the latest episode of Bryan Magee's *Men of Ideas*. Nowadays, it's destined to have a coterie following. You have to pay to hear full episodes and when you've done that you have to dig out the Ford/Perry gems from an annoying feed full of other podcasts that belong to the London Review of Books's overarching "Close Readings" brand. But it's worth the effort. Especially now. This intelligent, funny, enthusiastic podcast is in the midst of its best series, on narrative poetry.

My favourite episode of this series is the one on John Keats's *The Eve of St Agnes*. This is the poem in which the lovestruck Porphyro sneaks into his beloved Madeline's chamber, loads her table with syrops and turkish delight, then melts into her dream ("as the rose/ Blendeth its odour with the violet"). After which the lovers disappear into the night. It is, as Perry says, "full of rapture, erotic entanglement and excitement".

The impulse for literary criticism, I have sometimes thought, comes partly from a desire to hold on to a poem, to do something with it. You read a poem and you don't want to just leave it there on the page (it's the same reason we memorise them). The more excited you are, the tighter you hold on, the more you notice. Although as any podcast listener will tell you, being enthusiastic is quite a different thing from communicating enthusiasm effectively.

The poet John Keats

Perry and Ford are great communicators of their excitement: wry, lucid, self-amused, never overbearing. "The thing I like about it so much is the mention of her knees... I think that's terrifically good," Perry says of the passage in which Madeline undresses and "her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees". Perry and Ford are both disarmingly keen on the bathetic note introduced by the line in which Madeline leads her nurse to "a safe level matting". They are struck by the unexpected ordinariness of "level matting" in the jewelled Keatsian world. "We love that. Why do we love that so much?" Ford exclaims. "Why is it so good?" Perry says, chuckling. I would never have noticed the matting. But their enthusiasm guides you to feel a note of bathos in the poem you might have missed.

Every episode is full of good stuff. I loved the information in the one on *Paradise Lost Book IX* about William Empson once remarking that had John Milton been stuck in Eden he would have marched straight up to the tree of knowledge, eaten the fruit, then written a self-justifying pamphlet about it.

There is a surprisingly good one on Robert Browning's mysterious *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, a poem about which I wrote a disastrously ignorant essay at university and that I have been ignoring ever since. But Perry remarks intriguingly that Browning at his best is as good as English poetry gets. I eye the forbidding selected works on my shelf with fresh interest. You know a podcast is great when it sends you to the *Selected Browning*. But well-communicated enthusiasm will do that to you.

"Sorry, I'm getting too excited. This happens to me over Keats," Ford says mid-analysis. "No, it's very good, I like it," Perry says. Me too.

Look good and feel great with our newsletter

Sign up to the Times Fashion newsletter for the latest tips and trends from our style experts straight to your inbox every Thursday. Subscribers can sign up by going to 'My newsletters'.

To try a digital subscription, visit thetimes.com/subscribe

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Films

What movies to watch or record on television this week

Saturday September 12

Avengers: Endgame 12, 2019
Channel 4, 8.15pm

The 22nd instalment of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (Iron Man, Thor, Hulk et al) digs beneath costume and reminds us that there are quality thespians at work here. The film begins soon after the end of Infinity War, with half the world's population cruelly vaporised by Thanos (Josh Brolin) and the other half dealing with this traumatic absence. At the time it made for a fitting end to a saga of commercial ambition and thundering creative swagger. But it all starts again this Christmas, as *Avengers: Doomsday* hits cinemas. (181min)

Marvel epic

Robert Downey Jr as Iron Man in Marvel's Avengers: Endgame

Seven Thunders PG, 1957
Talking Pictures TV, 1.20pm

Based on a novel by Rupert Croft-Brooke, *Seven Thunders* is a tale of derring-do set during the Second World War. It follows the exploits of Dave (Stephen Boyd) and Jim (Tony Wright), two escaped British prisoners of war who are hiding out in Marseilles, waiting for a fishing boat to smuggle them back to Britain. James Robertson Justice is Dr Martout, the man who can help them with their passage, but who is also a serial killer murdering refugees and taking their money (a character inspired by the real-life French poisoner Marvel Petiot). (100min)

The History of Sound 15, 2025
Sky Premiere, 2.10pm

Movie premiere

Two men in a tent, freed by the remoteness of the wilderness to rip off each other's clothes. It worked in *Brokeback Mountain* and it works again here. Paul Mescal and Josh O'Connor star as Lionel and David, American musicians on a song-finding mission to rural New England in 1919. By day they hear locals singing ditties and record them on wax cylinders. By night they make the beast with two backs. The music in the film is gently rapturous and while neither of the stars is Nick Drake, they can hold a tune. (128min)

I, Robot 12, 2004
Channel 4, 11.50pm

Inspired by the stories of Isaac Asimov, this slick sci-fi thriller wears its CGI effects well. At first glance it might seem to be another dumb action picture, but there is more to it than that. For a start, Will Smith as a robot-phobic cop investigating a crime that seems to have been perpetrated by an android is downbeat and free of his usual swagger. The man versus machine themes have been explored before (and since), but there is plenty here to get the audience thinking. And the director Alex Proyas's vision of the future is effectively realised. (115min)

Best matinee

Lawrence of Arabia
PG, 1962
Saturday, BBC2, 1.30pm

David Lean's desert epic still dazzles

The vast canvas of David Lean's historical epic is matched only by the scale of its ambition. The Allies' activities in the Middle East during the First World War are filtered through the eyes of TE Lawrence (Peter O'Toole). Everything about it is big: the shoot lasted 14 months, and the finished film feels barely shorter. Still, it is impressive. The strong cast includes Alec Guinness as Prince Faisal and Omar Sharif as a tribal chief. O'Toole had to put a layer of sponge foam under his camel's saddle to protect his backside; the Bedouin cast copied him. (210min) **Wendy Ide**

Monday September 14

This Gun for Hire
PG, 1941
Film4, 1.35pm

Hidden gem

Alan Ladd went from uncredited roles in studio pabulum to A-list stardom thanks to this one movie. The reason? He played a hitman, and with complete ferocity. His Raven is an unregenerate toughie who, in the midst of a Graham Greene adaptation about selling wartime poison gas secrets, is happy to shoot women (or beat them) as well as men, and casually murder any witnesses to his hits, including cops. However, studio morality of the time insisted that Raven be humanised, so he was given a fondness for cats. So, he's fine then. (81min)

For Whom the Bell Tolls
PG, 1943
Film4, 3.25pm

Ernest Hemingway chose Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman to portray the Spanish Civil War fighters/lovers Robert and María, and while the leading pair smoulder nicely, the rest of the film is best enjoyed as a thrilling war movie, rather than as a companion to Hemingway's great novel. Cooper's world-weary American joins the International Brigades to fight Franco's fascists and accepts a near-suicidal mission to destroy a critical bridge. Joining a band of Republican rebels, he meets and falls in love with Bergman's vengeful guerrilla. (170min)

Get Carter 18, 1971
BBC2, 11.05pm

"You're a big man, but you're in bad shape." Has Michael Caine been cooler or more quotable than he is as the London gangster investigating his brother's death in Newcastle? Dismissed by many on its release, Mike Hodges's film was championed in the Nineties by Quentin Tarantino. While the violence won't raise eyebrows now, the treatment of women may. Stripped, slapped, subjected to awkward phone sex, drowned in a car — Britt Ekland and her fellow actresses don't fare well. That's kind of the point, though. These are not pleasant men. (112min)

Tuesday September 15

Seance on a Wet Afternoon PG, 1964
Talking Pictures TV, 1.30pm

Hidden gem

A somewhat forgotten British crime drama with superior credentials, Bryan Forbes's creepy thriller stars Richard Attenborough, wearing a prosthetic nose, and Kim Stanley as Bill and Myra Savage, amateur psychics who hatch a plot to kidnap the daughter of a tycoon, before using their bogus powers to "find" her and claim the reward. We later find out that the couple lost a son in childbirth. The atmosphere is steeped in a drizzly and downbeat mood. (114min)

The Bank Job 15, 2008
Sky Cinema Crime, 10pm

Jason Statham stars in a Cockneys-versus-toffs heist movie that does what it says on the tin. The setting is swinging London in the 1960s; Statham plays Terry Leather (no, really), a wheeler-dealer car trader with his fingers in a few other pies. Saffron Burrows slinks about as Martine Love (honestly), a former model who tips Terry off about a bank vault that is ripe for the picking. Terry assembles a team and pulls off a daring bank job. It's only after the contents of the safety deposit boxes are revealed that Terry realises he is in over his head. (111min)

Lynne Ramsay's psychological drama You Were Never Really Here

You Were Never Really Here
15, 2017
Film4, 12.40am

Despite everything you may have read about Lynne Ramsay's *You Were Never Really Here*, it is not that film. It is not a psycho-thriller about a former FBI agent (Joaquin Phoenix) who is hired to rescue a senator's daughter (Ekaterina Samsonov) from a powerful paedophile ring. It is not a revenge movie about a loner kicking serious ass on the mean city streets. And it is not a sombre meditation on masculinity in crisis. Well, it is all these things, but it's also a film that uses these ideas to build towards something more disturbing. (88min)

Wednesday September 16

Horrible Histories: The Movie PG, 2019
BBC3, 7.05pm

Family comedy

The big-screen debut of the cultural behemoth that is *Horrible Histories* sensibly focuses on the Romans, fertile ground for the gruesome and the comedic. Atti (Sebastian Croft), a smart-arse teenager, falls foul of Nero's wrath and is consigned to a fate worse than death: being posted to Britain. There he witnesses the rise of Boudicca and falls in with an ancient Briton girl. We get bodily functions galore: flatulence ("I'm Farticus!"), vomit, horse wee and there are gags for grown-ups too, including Derek Jacobi as "C-c-c-Claudius". (92min)

Greed 15, 2019
Film4, 9pm

Michael Winterbottom's film "about" the high street billionaire Philip Green swaggers about taking potshots at a character, effortlessly played by Steve Coogan,

Peter O'Toole in Lawrence of Arabia

Sicario
15, 2015
Tuesday, BBC1, 10.40pm

Emily Blunt's star quality

In Denis Villeneuve's thriller about a drugs cartel, Emily Blunt is Kate Macer, an FBI agent who is part of a team raiding an Arizona bungalow in a kidnap search. Walls are smashed, revealing the grisliest of finds, followed by an explosion that shows this film will not play by the rules — and neither will the drug barons on the American-Mexican border. Moral certainty is shaky when we meet a government drugs agent (Josh Brolin) and his mysterious sidekick (Benicio del Toro), who recruit the idealistic Macer. (121min) **Wendy Ide**

Best action

Emily Blunt as an idealistic FBI agent

Sunday September 13

Back to the Future II
PG, 1989
BBC1, 2.50pm

The second instalment is the smartest and darkest of the trilogy, although it fared badly with critics and audiences. Marty McFly (Michael J Fox) and Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) are catapulted into a future of hoverboards, wearable technology and self-tying laces. When their nemesis Biff Tannen steals the DeLorean time machine and uses it to alter history for his benefit, the duo return to 1955 and the action of the first film. This time-travel classic is packed with sly references to previous films. (108min)

Breakfast at Tiffany's PG, 1961
Sky Arts, 8pm

Classic comedy

Truman Capote wanted Holly Golightly, the central character in the novella that inspired this film, to be played by Marilyn Monroe. However, Monroe was told that playing a prostitute would be a questionable career move, so the role went to Audrey Hepburn. As the irrepressible party girl Holly, Hepburn cut an iconic figure. The Givenchy sheath dress, oversized sunglasses and cigarette holder made a lasting impression. George Peppard makes less of his role as the writer who is captivated by Holly. (115min)

Audrey Hepburn stars in Breakfast at Tiffany's

Just Mercy 12, 2019
BBC1, 11.20pm

Michael B Jordan oozes charisma as the protagonist of this true-life account of a death row lawyer and social justice activist. Based on Bryan Stevenson's memoir, the film charts his early career in Alabama and his efforts to overturn the wrongful murder conviction and attendant death sentence of Walter McMillian, a taciturn woodcutter (Jamie Foxx). The early sequences are the best, with Jordan quietly hypnotic as the Harvard graduate absorbing the prejudices of the Alabama establishment. (137min)

who is so close to Green in alleged lifestyle and business practice as to make his screen sobriquet almost ridiculous. Sir Richard "Greedy" McCreadie is trying to rebrand a tarnished public image after the collapse of his department store chain, with accusations of financial mismanagement and asset stripping. The screenplay has the pulse of an Armando Iannucci political satire. (104min)

Sicario 2: Soldado 15, 2018
BBC1, 10.40pm

Grimly violent and politically objectionable, this is a furiously gripping shoot-'em-up that unfolds like a Howard Hawks western. Instead of John Wayne and Robert Mitchum we have Josh Brolin and Benicio del Toro as, respectively, a CIA fixer and freelance hitman, back from the slaughter of Sicario. Isabela Moner plays the daughter of a cartel kingpin who is kidnapped in a CIA-orchestrated sting, part of a dangerous US plan to initiate a drugs war south of the border. Brolin and del Toro inhabit their flinty-eyed antiheroes with gusto. (122min)

Thursday September 17

Sapphire PG, 1959
Talking Pictures TV, 9.20pm

Brit drama

The director Basil Dearden and producer Michael Relph made a number of social-awareness themed movies including this Bafta-winning crime drama that deals with race relations. It focuses on the murder of a pregnant mixed-race woman (the titular Sapphire), who has been "passing" as white. The suspects include her fiancé, an architecture student whose family did not approve of the relationship. One of the police officers assigned to the case is quick to jump to racist assumptions about the victim's behaviour, which hampers the investigation. (92min)

Io Capitano 15, 2023
Film4, 11.25pm

This emotive migrant drama is the Italian film-maker Matteo Garrone's best movie since *Gomorrah* (2008). The film follows the hellish odyssey of two idealistic teens from Dakar to Tripoli via the Sahara desert and across the chaotic Mediterranean. Seydou Sarr, a Senegalese TikTok star, is dripping with charisma as the nervous migrant Seydou, whose dreams of pop-singing success in Europe propel him onwards with his cousin Moussa (Moustapha Fall, also excellent). What lies in their way is a catalogue of degeneration and unspeakable horrors. (122min)

The Innocents 15, 2021
Channel 4, 2am

A superhero movie for grown-ups from the Norwegian film-maker Eskil Vogt, simultaneously channelling the wicked instincts of Lars von Trier and the disquieting atmosphere of *Let the Right One In*. The protagonists are all children, mildly neglected latchkey kids on a high-rise housing estate in Oslo who slowly develop superpowers, including telepathy and telekinesis. The film is unafraid to answer the question: "What would happen to children if they suddenly developed superpowers?" They would do very bad things. (117min)

Friday September 18

The Fix 15, 2026
Sky Cinema Premiere, 8pm

Movie premiere

Based on an idea by a former CIA operative, this mix of espionage drama and heist thriller follows a group of former CIA operatives who are seeking a purpose in life following the end of the war in Afghanistan. Luckily, veteran Larry (Liam Neeson) has a mission for them — going to the Iranian capital Tehran to retrieve $25 million that was hidden in the wall of the former American embassy. It's now a hotel and the team on the ground, led by Zachary Levi's Tucker, have no trouble getting in. But what they find is worth far more than the money... (141min)

Starve Acre 15, 2023
BBC2, 11pm

In Daniel Kokotajlo's folk horror, Richard (Matt Smith) and Juliette (Morfydd Clark) are an unhappy couple who move to the Yorkshire moors with their (possibly possessed) young son, who stabs a local pony in the eye and then mysteriously dies. The story then swerves to a small animal skeleton that Richard unearths in the garden, one that magically grows flesh and fur, becoming a demonic hare who has been known locally for 300 years as Dandelion Jack. Kokotajlo lays on the alienated mood nicely. (98min)

Morfydd Clark and Matt Smith in the folk horror Starve Acre

Moonage Daydream
15, 2022
Channel 4, 1.20am

Five years in the making, using "thousands of hours" of archive footage and 48 newly remastered concert tracks, this David Bowie documentary is one huge kaleidoscopic monster. It's the first film to be "authorised" by the Bowie estate and so it bears the thrilling hallmarks of all-access swagger. The director and lifelong Bowie fan Brett Morgen is in his element, luxuriating in lofty ideas. As it skips through the years, the format becomes increasingly haphazard, but by the end it is undoubtedly moving. (135min)

● **Previews by Kevin Maher, Ed Potton, Wendy Ide, Joe Clay**

Saturday 12

★ Picks of the day

Last Night of the Proms
BBC2, 7.10pm/
BBC1, 9pm

From Dolly Parton to Edward Elgar

Sakari Oramo conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra, joined by the acclaimed pianist Yuja Wang and the tenor Nicky Spence, as the great summer music festival takes its patriotic bow for 2026. Presented by Katie Derham and Nick Mohammed, the bill does have its customary non-flag-wavy bits in the first half on BBC2. The pieces include Bernstein's Overture to Candide, Barber's Piano Concerto and Smetana's symphonic poems *Ma vlast*. And then it's time to switch over to BBC1 at 9pm for the more popular stuff that has been changed to feature a tribute to Dolly Parton, including Sheridan Smith performing *9 to 5*, before the familiar round of Union Jacks, *Rule, Britannia!*, *Jerusalem* and *Land of Hope and Glory*. Ben Dowell

Saturday Night Live UK
Sky One/Now, 10pm

When the British version of the US show launched in March, doom-mongers were predicting disaster. That it was rather good now presents its creative team with a slightly different problem: can it live up to expectations? With the inaugural ensemble (including Al Nash, Jack Shep, Emma Sidi and Paddy Young) returning alongside one newcomer, the young comedian Freddie Meredith, there is no reason lightning shouldn't strike twice, especially given the production team's appetite for bold skits that didn't underestimate the audience. My favourite was the spoof of the terrifying British pork advert of 1984, a pleasingly esoteric target that was brilliantly skewered. The show also now has star-pulling power, with Jeff Goldblum the first of a rolling roster of guest hosts. **BD**

The comedians of Saturday Night Live: UK return for more skits

The Celebrity Inner Circle
BBC1, 8.15pm

The Amanda Holden game show returns with more celebrity/civilian pairings — and some rather fiendish rules. It's essentially a complex game of strategy, guesswork and sharp wits involving a secret stash of cash handed to the five hopefuls. For this opener, the celebrities are the TV presenter Ade Adepitan, the former *Strictly* professional Janette Manrara, the comedian Des Clarke and the actresses Catherine Tyldesley and Lisa Riley. **BD**

Beck
BBC4, 9pm

With Peter Haber's Martin Beck now relegated to desk duties in the series of moodily mesmerising Swedish films that bear his name, he has made way for the youngsters, including his grandson, Vilhelm Beck (Valter Skarsgard, son of Stellan), and the brilliant Alex (Jennie Silfverhjelm). This episode centres on a Stockholm gangland shooting and the work of a shadowy vigilante whose actions look set to escalate tensions. **BD**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live
11.30 Mary at 90: A Lifetime of Cooking Mary Berry looks back at her career (r)
12.00 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
12.45 The Football Interview
1.00 BBC News; Weather
1.15 Wallace & Gromit: A Close Shave The animated characters get mixed up in sheep rustling (r)
1.45 The Gruffalo Animated adaptation of the children's book, featuring the voice of Robbie Coltrane (r)
2.15 The Gruffalo's Child Animated sequel, with the voice of Robbie Coltrane (r)
2.45 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
3.45 Final Score
5.35 BBC News
5.45 BBC Regional News; Weather

Presenter Amanda Holden (8.15pm)

5.55 Live Athletics: The Ultimate Championships 2026 Continued coverage of day two of the inaugural staging of the biennial track and field invitational event, which takes place at the National Athletics Centre in Budapest, Hungary

8.15 The Celebrity Inner Circle ★ New series. Amanda Holden hosts the quiz show with guests Ade Adepitan, Janette Manrara and Des Clarke. **See Pick of the Day** (1/8)

9.00 Last Night of the Proms: The Finale ★ Katie Derham and Nick Mohammed host the second half of the closing concert, featuring the pianist Yuja Wang and the Scottish tenor Nicky Spence, and conducted by Sakari Oramo. **See Pick of the Day**

10.40 BBC News; Weather

11.00 Match of the Day Kelly Cates presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Bournemouth v Brentford at Vitality Stadium, and Liverpool v Fulham at Anfield

12.25 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.30 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.10 am Children's Programme
8.50 Gardeners' World (r)
9.50 FILM The Red Shoes (U, 1948) Powell and Pressburger's drama starring Moira Shearer
12.00 pm The Great British Sewing Bee Textile contest (r)
1.00 Race Against the Tide (r)
1.30 FILM Lawrence of Arabia (PG, 1962) Oscar-winning epic drama starring Peter O'Toole
5.00 Live Athletics: The Ultimate Championships 2026: Day Two BBC Two Coverage of day two of the inaugural staging of the biennial track and field invitational event, which takes place at the National Athletics Centre in Budapest, Hungary
5.55 Flog It! (r)
6.40 Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs Paul Murton pays a visit to Wester Ross (r)

Chaka Khan performs live (10pm)

7.10 Last Night of the Proms ★ Katie Derham and Nick Mohammed lead the celebrations live from the Royal Albert Hall as the biggest party in classical music gets under way. The pianist Yuja Wang and the Scottish tenor Nicky Spence top the bill as Sakari Oramo conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and the BBC Singers. **See Pick of the Day**

9.00 Radio 2 in the Park 2026: Saturday Highlights Performances from the middle day of the festival at City Park in Stirling, with a line-up including the Script, Emeli Sandé, ABC and Texas

10.00 Chaka Khan: Radio 2 in the Park 2026 The singer's headline set live from City Park in Stirling, bringing her powerhouse vocals, classic hits and five decades' worth of soul and funk to the stage

11.00 Chaka Khan at the BBC Archive performances by the American singer (r)

11.40 Texas at the BBC A collection of archive performances (r)

12.50 am Today at the Test England v Pakistan. Highlights of day four of the third and final Test in the series from Edgbaston
1.50 FILM Saint Omer (12, 2022) French drama starring Kayije Kagame and Aurélia Petit

ITV1

6.00 am James Martin's Islands to Highlands (r)
6.30 Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh (r)
8.25 Prue Leith's Cotswold Kitchen
9.25 ITV News
9.30 James Martin's Saturday Morning Chat and recipes
12.00 pm Gary Barlow's Food and Wine Tour: New Zealand
12.30 ITV News; Weather
12.40 James Martin's Great British Adventure (r)
1.15 Live ITV Racing: From Doncaster Coverage of day three of the St Leger Festival, including feature race, the Betfred St Leger
4.30 Tipping Point (r)
5.30 ITV News; Weather
5.50 Regional News; Weather
6.00 The Chase Celebrity Special Bradley Walsh presents (r)

The Box's Gary Lineker (8.15pm)

7.00 The Voice UK Emma Willis hosts the spinning-chair singing contest, with coaches Tom Jones, Will.i.am, Kelly Rowland, Tom Fletcher and Danny Jones assessing more acts (4/10)

8.15 The Box Gary Lineker hosts as the celebrities are pushed to the limits of both mind and body as they face two very different challenges (3/10)

9.30 Romesh Ranganathan's Parents' Evening With Alex Brooker and his mum Elaine, Jeff Brazier and his son Bobby, and Sophie Ellis-Bextor and her mum Janet Ellis (r)

10.30 ITV News

10.40 FILM Rush Hour 2 (12, 2001) The two mismatched detectives travel to Hong Kong to investigate a bombing at the US embassy, and take on Triad gangsters. Action comedy sequel starring Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker

12.25 am English Football League Highlights 1.40 Shop on TV
3.00 Dermot's Taste of Ireland (r) (SL) **3.25 Gary Barlow's Food and Wine Tour: New Zealand** (r) (SL) **3.50 Unwind with ITV**
5.05 The Joy of Pets (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven **7.15** Back from the Brink. Bottlenose dolphins in Aberdeen harbour (r) **8.15** Highland Cops. A climber goes missing on the Isle of Skye (r) **9.15** Black Watch: A Soldier's Story. Examining the National Theatre of Scotland's play (r) **10.15** Black Watch. A performance of Gregory Burke's play, starring Brian Ferguson (r)

11.50pm-Midnight Loop. Trackie McLeod prepares for his first solo exhibition (r)
BBC1 Wales 2.45pm The Travelling Auctioneers. James Broad uncovers a book containing a valuable surprise (r) **3.15-3.45pm** Best of Weatherman Walking (r)

Your seven-day radio listings guide

Pages 42-43

Simon Schama presents Key Changes
Today, Radio 3, 1pm

Channel 4

6.10 am Cheers Comedy (r)
8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.50 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.50 The Simpsons (r)
1.50pm Four in a Bed At the Butterchurn Guesthouse in Otterburn, Northumberland (r)
2.20 Four in a Bed The second visit of the week is at the Hillside Hotel in East Lothian (r)
2.50 Four in a Bed Guest house owners converge at Bella Vista Lodge in Blackpool (r)
3.20 Four in a Bed The final visit is to North Star Sanctum in Fitling, East Yorkshire (r)
3.55 Four in a Bed Payment Day (r)
4.25 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces A circus show van is converted into a home (r)
5.30 Grand Designs A factory-built house in West Sussex (r)
6.25 Channel 4 News

Will Smith in I, Robot (11.50pm)

6.55 Formula 1 Spanish Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights Steve Jones presents action from the battle for grid positions for the 14th round of the season, which takes place at Circuito de Madring in Madrid

8.15 FILM **Avengers: Endgame (12, 2019)** The superhero team is scattered following their failure to stop evil warlord Thanos from wiping out half the life in the universe. However, the return of an old friend offers them a second chance and they reunite for a desperate journey back in time to find the means to set things right. Fantasy adventure, starring Robert Downey Jr, Chris Evans, Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Jeremy Renner, Scarlett Johansson and Josh Brolin

11.50 FILM **I, Robot (12, 2004)** Sci-fi thriller starring Will Smith

1.45 am Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) (SL)
2.35 Millionaire Hoarders (r)
3.30 Location, Location, Location Property in Essex (r)
4.25 Sunday Brunch (r)
4.35 The Simpsons (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.00 Entertainment News on 5
9.10 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun Reality show (r)
9.40 The King's Guard: Serving the Crown The regiments are just under a week away from the Coronation of King Charles (r)
10.40 Inside Windsor Castle: A Royal Residence (r)
12.40 pm The Royals Uncensored
1.40 Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Wild Double bill (r)
3.40 Sam & Ade Go Birding Samuel West and Adrian Edmondson go bird watching together (r)
4.40 Sam & Ade Go Birding Sam West takes Adrian Edmondson to Holkham Estate (r)
5.40 Morecambe & Wise: The Unseen Tapes Rare footage of the comedy duo entertaining the nation (r)

How rich are William and Kate? (8.15pm)

7.10 5 News Weekend

7.15 Cycling: Vuelta a España 2026 Stage 20, a 186.8km route from La Calahorra to Collado del Alguacil

8.15 The Royal Rich List 2026: Who's Up, Who's Down? With contributions by finance experts, this countdown reveals the top 10 richest royals, revealing how they make their millions and where the money really comes from

9.45 The Jobless Prince: What Will Harry Do Next? A team of experts featuring PR specialists, businesspeople, life coaches and royal insiders looks at what the future holds for the Duke of Sussex (r)

11.15 1986: Most Shocking Moments Controversies, scandals and surprises from the year, with *EastEnders* introducing a gay couple to Albert Square (r)

1.10 am Entertainment News on 5
1.15 Cruise TV (r)
2.15 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
3.00 Cruising with Susan Calman
4.35 The Wonderful World of Chocolate
5.25 Entertainment News
5.35 Children's Shows

STV **1.15-4.30pm** Live STV Racing: From Doncaster. Coverage of day three of the St Leger Festival, including feature race the Betfred St Leger. Plus, day one of Irish Champions weekend from Leopardstown, and racing from Chester **1.40-3.00am** Shop **3.50-5.05am** Unwind with STV
S4C **5.00pm** Clwb Rygbi **7.15** News **7.30** Adeiladu'r Freuddwyd: Camp Out West (r) **8.00** Gwesty Aduniad (r) **9.00** Noson Lawen (r) **10.00** Cyfrinachau'r Llyfrgell (r) **11.00-11.35** Gwlad y Basg: Gwilym Bowen Rhys (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Today at the Test England v Pakistan. Highlights of day four
8.00 Golf: Solheim Cup Highlights Action from day two of the women's team competition
9.00 Beck A gang in one of Stockholm's suburbs is thought to be involved in a fatal shooting. **See Pick of the Day** (S11, ep2)
10.30 To the Manor Born Audrey takes a holiday (S1, ep6)
10.55 Keeping Up Appearances Hyacinth searches for a small country retreat (S4, ep5)
11.25 The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin First episode of the classic comedy starring Leonard Rossiter (S1, ep1)
11.55-12.25am The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin Reggie visits a safari park (S1, ep2)

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

12.10 pm Agatha Christie's Poirot An archaeologist's wife is murdered during a Middle East excavation (S8, ep2)
2.15 Midsomer Murders The members of a post-operative rehab club start dying (S22, ep2)
4.15 Midsomer Murders The owners of Karras Games gather for a murder mystery weekend (S22, ep3)
6.10 Midsomer Murders The annual Scarecrow Festival takes a grisly turn (S22, ep4)
8.05 Midsomer Murders A body is found in a theatre (S22, ep5)
10.00 Vera The discovery of a missing teenager's body stirs up tension in a rural community
11.50-2.05am Inspector Morse The sleuth investigates a double mystery (S5, ep4)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm Doctor Who
7.45 Doctor Who
8.30 Here We Go
9.00 Here We Go
9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys
10.00 Mrs Brown's Boys
10.30 Ghosts US
10.50 Ghosts US
11.10 Ghosts US
11.30-12.15am Schitt's Creek

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

6.00am Live Solheim Cup Golf Foursomes on day two
2.55pm Live Formula 1 Spanish Grand Prix qualifying
5.00 Live SNF: Tottenham Hotspur v Everton
8.00 Live US Open Tennis Coverage of the women's final
11.00-12.00m't Live International Rugby Union

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

1.45 pm Discovering: Sean Connery
2.45 Riverdance 25th Anniversary Show A performance of the dance show at Dublin's 3Arena
4.45 Beach Boys: Good Vibrations Tour
5.45 Classic Albums A celebration of Don McLean's 1971 release *American Pie*
7.00 Johnny Cash: The Man in Black in Britain The connection the singer had with the UK
8.00 Johnny Cash: A Night to Remember Live 1973 A performance by the country star at Los Angeles' Ahmanson Theatre
9.00 Billy Joel: And So It Goes The singer-songwriter reflects on his reunion with his father
11.50-1.10am Queen: The Magic Years The rock group's rise to fame

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.10 pm Cadfael Pilgrims find themselves suspected of murder
2.55 Minder Arthur's friend is threatened
4.00 Junk & Disorderly Henry Cole, Allen Millyard and Guy Willison look to sell well at a racecourse
5.00 Junk & Disorderly
6.00 American Pickers
7.00 Ice Road Truckers: Deadliest Roads Lisa Kelly and Dave Redmon race to escape a snowstorm
8.00 Ice Road Truckers: Deadliest Roads The drivers face their most dangerous mission yet
9.00 English Football League Highlights Action from the latest matches including Derby County v Birmingham City
10.30 FILM **Red Heat (18, 1988)** Action thriller starring Arnold Schwarzenegger

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

6.10pm FILM **Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice (12, 2016)** Superhero adventure starring Ben Affleck and Henry Cavill
9.00 FILM **Baywatch (15, 2017)** Action comedy starring Dwayne Johnson
11.20 Family Guy
11.50-12.20am Family Guy

TNT Sports 1

SKY 410, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

1.00pm-2.45 Live World Rally Championship The Rally Chile
3.00-4.00 Live World Rally Championship The Rally Chile
6.30-10.30 Live Premier League: Sunderland v Arsenal (Kick-off **8.00**)
12.30am-4.45 Live CPL: Barbados Tridents v Jamaica Kingsmen In Barbados

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm A Place in the Sun A couple are looking for a holiday home in Cyprus
2.40 Come Dine with Me
3.15 Come Dine with Me
3.50 Come Dine with Me
4.20 Come Dine with Me
4.50 Come Dine with Me
5.20 Four in a Bed
5.55 Four in a Bed
6.25 Four in a Bed
6.55 Four in a Bed
7.25 Four in a Bed
8.00 Griff's Canadian Adventure Griff explores the prairies and plains of the Saskatchewan and Alberta provinces
9.00 9/11: 102 Minutes That Changed America Amateur footage and audiotape of the attacks on the World Trade Center
11.40-12.40am 24 Hours in A&E A 40-year-old woman arrives having been knocked over while crossing a road

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.40 pm New Tricks
3.00 Pie in the Sky Crime drama. (S1, ep1)
4.00 Pie in the Sky Henry searches for a missing policeman (S1, ep2)
5.00 Darby and Joan The search for answers about Jack's past leads him and Joan to two warring brothers (S2, ep1)
6.00 Darby and Joan Jack and Joan help a local nurse who was the victim of a hit-and-run in a small surfing town (S2, ep2)
7.00 The Brokenwood Mysteries An actor collapses and dies during a performance of *Hamlet* (S2, ep2)
9.00 Wallander The detective investigates the murder of a birdwatcher (S2, ep3)
11.00-12.10am Blackshore The past and present begin to merge for Fia (4/6)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
8.00 Bangers & Cash Derek travels to Southwold to pick up a superb Hillman Avenger
9.00 Dream Car Fixers
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash A 1275 Mini GT

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.40pm The Penguin (3/8)
9.00 Fightland (5/8)
10.00 The Looming Tower Fact-based drama starring Jeff Daniels. (1/10)
11.00 The Looming Tower The FBI begins its investigation into the embassy bombings (2/10)
12.00-1.10am Task (4/7)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

12.45 pm A Room with a View (PG, 1985) Period drama starring Helena Bonham Carter
3.00 Rosaline (15, 2022) Comedy starring Kaitlyn Dever
4.50 Hell and High Water (PG, 1954) Cold War adventure starring Richard Widmark
6.55 Behind Enemy Lines (12, 2001) Bosnian War drama starring Gene Hackman
9.00 Peppermint (15, 2018) An LA banker sets out on a vengeance mission after her husband and daughter are killed. Revenge thriller starring Jennifer Garner
11.05-1.00am Legion (15, 2010) The Archangel Michael travels to Earth to protect an unborn child from God's wrath. Fantasy starring Paul Bettany

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.20 pm FILM **Seven Thunders (PG, 1957)** Second World War drama starring Stephen Boyd
3.20 Look at Life
3.35 Whiplash
4.10 FILM **The Secret Place (PG, 1957)** Crime drama starring Belinda Lee
6.10 None But the Tortoise
6.25 Dick Turpin
7.00 Maigret
8.00 The Duchess of Duke Street Louisa decides she has had enough
9.05 FILM **The Driver (15, 1978)** A detective embroiled in a long-running investigation sets up a fake robbery in a bid to catch his man. Thriller starring Ryan O'Neal
10.55 Eurotrash
11.30-1.20am FILM **The Blood of Fu Manchu (15, 1969)** Thriller with Christopher Lee

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

5.20pm RAF at 100 with Ewan and Colin McGregor
7.15 Constantine the Great
9.30 RAF at 100 with Ewan and Colin McGregor
11.25 Weathered: Earth's Extremes Documentary
12.00-2.00am RAF at 100 with Ewan and Colin McGregor Documentary

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.10pm I Am Richard Pryor
8.00 Lorne Documentary about *Saturday Night Live* creator Lorne Michaels
10.00 Liverpool Narcos Documentary about the drug trade in 1980s Liverpool
11.00 Liverpool Narcos
12.00-1.00am Liverpool Narcos Documentary

Sunday 13

★ Picks of the day

Apocalypse
Channel 4, 9pm

It's the end of the world, will they blow it?

"What would you do if civilisation came to an end?" is the question posed to viewers as this "radical experiment" begins. Staged in an abandoned US town that is used to train soldiers in urban warfare but was built to support the community of a vast psychiatric hospital, this show sees what happens when 14 people are forced to survive for 28 days in a simulated post-apocalyptic future. It's not the most reassuring viewing, and not because of the geopolitical context. Formed into two gangs, the survivors — among them a former Paralympian, a taxi driver and a *Made in Chelsea* star — do not cover themselves in glory, arguing over strategy and scrabbling for resources. This is the way the world ends: not with a bang but a bicker. Victoria Segal

Antiques Roadshow
BBC1, 8pm

All manner of lovingly protected relics fall under the eyes of the *Antiques Roadshow* experts but the programme's real act of conservation is to bottle the essence of the just-past summer for viewers settling into their autumnal sofas. The first show of the 49th series comes from the Dartington Estate in Devon, where Fiona Bruce and her team of experts round up another catalogue of intriguing finds. As ever, the story is almost as significant as the value, and this episode's highlights include a claret jug hidden underground from the Nazis, a mid-century abstract painting, and letters from the collection of the computing visionary Charles Babbage. There's also a peculiar ceramic spaniel, and a new challenge for Fiona Bruce: order three pieces of Devon pottery according to their value. **VS**

Fiona Bruce returns to present the 49th series of Antiques Roadshow

The Great Celebrity Pottery Throw Down
Channel 4, 7.45pm

There have been one-off festive iterations with celebrities before — won by James Fleet, Hugh Dennis, Martin Kemp and Colin Murray — but this is the first series and the first celebrity contest away from Christmas. With Liza Tarbuck as host, Lucy Beaumont, Fatiha El-Gorri, Richard Herring (comedians), Paul Merson (ex-footballer), Layton Williams (actor) and Denise Van Outen (presenter) will be throwing shapes. **John Dugdale**

Big Brother
ITV2, 9pm

Time was when a *Big Brother* launch would have been treated as the show of the week, let alone show of the night. Suffice to say, there's less media fanfare for the 23rd series, arriving on ITV2 tonight (the launch repeated on ITV1 at 10.45pm). Its hosts AJ Odudu and Will Best say it'll be "the biggest, longest series in this iteration of *Big Brother* ever" with more housemates, and with the house reimagined as one "of surprises".

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
7.05 Match of the Day (r)
8.30 Politics England
9.00 Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg Interviews with politicians and public figures
10.00 Live Great North Run Coverage of the half-marathon, which sees more than 60,000 runners negotiate the course from Newcastle upon Tyne to South Shields
2.00 pm BBC News; Weather
2.15 Songs of Praise Aled Jones marks the 500th anniversary of the translation of the New Testament into English
2.50 FILM Back to the Future Part II (PG, 1989) Sci-fi comedy sequel starring Michael J Fox and Christopher Lloyd
4.35 BBC News
4.50 BBC Regional News; Weather

Back to the Future Part II (2.50pm)

5.00 Live Athletics: The Ultimate Championships 2026 Coverage of the third and day of the inaugural staging of the biennial track and field invitational event, which takes place in Budapest, Hungary

8.00 Antiques Roadshow From Dartington Estate in Devon, where finds include shoes modelled to look like feet and a quirky ceramic model of a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. **See Pick of the Day**

9.00 Vigil The truth of Jia's discovery has dangerous consequences for the team, who have to band together to go on a rescue mission that could spell disaster (5/6)

10.00 BBC News at Ten; Regional News and Weather

10.30 Match of the Day Highlights of the latest Premier League matches, featuring Manchester United v Manchester City and Coventry City v Brighton & Hove Albion

11.20 FILM Just Mercy (12, 2019) A death row prisoner, with the help of a young civil rights defence attorney, appeals his murder conviction. Fact-based drama starring Michael B Jordan and Jamie Foxx

1.30 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
1.35 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.05 am Countryfile (r)
7.05 Breakfast The latest news
9.00 The Best of Weatherman Walking Highlights
9.30 Beechgrove Garden
10.00 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites
11.30 Caribbean Food Made Easy (r)
12.00 pm Lorraine Pascale: How to Be a Better Cook (r)
12.30 Bargain Hunt (r)
1.30 The Big Deal with Steph McGovern (r)
2.30 Live MOTD: Women's Super League: Arsenal v Crystal Palace (Kick-off **2.45**). All the action from the match at Emirates Stadium
5.00 Flog It! From Ashridge House, Hertfordshire (r)
6.00 Natural World: Super Powered Eagles Examining the science behind the extraordinary abilities of eagles (r)

Super Powered Eagles (6pm)

7.00 Countryfile Joe Crowley, Datshiane Navanayagam and Adam Henson head to Westacre Estate in Norfolk to discover how this historic rural estate is adapting to survive in the modern world

8.00 Pilgrimage: The Road Through the Alps The pilgrims travel from Appenzell to their final destination at Einsiedeln Abbey (3/3) (r)

9.00 Rob and Rylan's Passage to India Rob Rinder and Rylan Clark go on the final leg of their adventure, beginning by visiting the erotic temples of Khajuraho before joining a mud-wrestling club (3/3) (r)

10.00 Simple Minds: Radio 2 in the Park 2026 The rock band headline the final day of the event at City Park in Stirling, bringing proceedings to a close with a selection of hits from across nearly 50 years

11.15 Radio 2 in the Park 2026: Sunday Highlights With Level 42, James Blunt, Blue, Cast, Appleton and Deacon Blue

12.20 am Golf: Solheim Cup Highlights Day three
1.20 Today at the Test
2.20 Sign Zone: Colin from Accounts (r) (SL)
2.50 Colin from Accounts (r) (SL)
3.20 Saving Lives at Sea (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am The Voice UK (r)
7.00 James Martin's Saturday Morning Summer cocktails (r)
9.25 ITV News
9.30 Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh (r)
11.30 The Joy of Pets
12.30 pm ITV News; Weather
12.40 Love Your Garden (r)
1.15 Live ITV Racing: Live from Doncaster Coverage of day four of the St Leger Festival
4.00 Celebrity Lingo Kate Garraway and Ashley James battle Toyah Willcox and Carol Decker in the word game (r)
4.30 Tipping Point: Lucky Stars Ben Shephard hosts as Vernon Kay, Dion Dublin and Amanda Barrie take part (r)
5.30 ITV News; Weather
5.45 Regional News; Weather
6.00 The Chase (r)

Big Brother returns (10.45pm)

7.00 The 1% Club Quiz game show hosted by Lee Mack in which the questions are all about logic and common sense, with 100 contestants in every show having a chance of winning up to £100,000 (r)

8.00 The Box Gary Lineker continues to put the celebrities through their paces as the competition intensifies with the boxes opening in ever more weird and wonderful locations (4/10)

9.00 Trigger Point When a colleague's life is in danger, Lana and the team do all they can to stage a rescue as the counter-terrorism unit continues to follow leads left behind by the bombers (5/6)

10.00 ITV News

10.20 It'll Be Alright on the Night Television clangers (r)

10.45 Big Brother: Launch AJ Odudu and Will Best present as the reality contest returns, with a new cast of housemates from all walks of life moving in to the *Big Brother* house. Cameras capture their every move and the nation can follow every twist and turn as the action plays out (r)

12.15 am Shop on TV
3.00 Motorsport UK Action from Thruxton (r)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Prue Leith's Cotswold Kitchen Prue is joined by American actress Blake Lively (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 10.00-10.30am The Sunday Show **7.00pm** Reporting Scotland: News at Seven **7.15** The Repair Shop on the Road (r) **8.00** Pilgrimage: The Road to the Scottish Isles (r) **9.00** Highland Cops (r) **10.00** Still Game (r) **10.30** Scot Squad (r) **11.00** The Haggis Hunters: Our Lives (r) **11.30pm-Midnight** Style Fixers (r)
BBC1 Wales 8.30-9.00am Politics
BBC1 N Ireland 8.30-9.00am Weather Watchers (r) **2.15pm** Politics **2.45** Songs of Praise **3.20** The Travelling Auctioneers (r) **3.50** Oul Treasures (r) **4.20-4.35pm** The Chronicles of Strangford Shorts (r)
BBC1 Scotland 8.30-9.00am Our Lives (r)

The best of the week's live sport

Page 25

Manchester United's Bryan Mbuemo
Sky Main Event, 4.30pm

Channel 4

6.15 am Cheers Comedy (r)
7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.00 The Simpsons (r)
10.00 Sunday Brunch
1.00 pm Château DIY (r)
1.30 Four in a Bed At Home Farm B&B in Milton Keynes (r)
2.05 Four in a Bed From The Vale Hotel in Wiltshire (r)
2.35 Four in a Bed The third visit of the week is to Cottage Lodge Hotel in Brockenhurst (r)
3.05 Four in a Bed At Beach Sun Retreat in Dymchurch, Kent (r)
3.40 Four in a Bed Payment day (r)
4.10 Our Farm Next Door: Amanda, Clive and Kids (r)
5.15 Worst House on the Street A pair set out to overhaul their dated, single-glazed house (r)
6.15 Channel 4 News
6.45 Walkers Unpacked: Inside the Crisp Factory (r)

The celebrity potters (7.45pm)

7.45 The Great Celebrity Pottery Throw Down 2026 New series. Liza Tarbuck hosts a celebrity edition of the pottery contest, with Lucy Beaumont, Fatiha El-Ghorri, Richard Herring, Paul Merson, Denise Van Outen and Layton Williams. **See Pick of the Day** (1/5)

9.00 Apocalypse New series. Reality challenge in which two groups of ordinary people must survive in a mock-up post-apocalyptic environment using limited resources. **See Pick of the Day** (1/8)

10.15 Formula 1 Spanish Grand Prix Highlights Steve Jones presents action from the 14th round of the season, which took place at Circuito de Madring in Madrid. This is the first time this race has been held here, and McLaren will be looking to repeat their success when it was staged at Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya last year, when Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris were first and second

12.45 am The Jury 1.40 Kitchen Nightmares USA 2.30 Millionaire Hoarders 3.25 Most Expensive Houses 3.50 Couples Come Dine with Me 4.45 Sunday Brunch 5.00 The Simpsons 5.50 Countdown

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.00 Entertainment News on 5
9.15 The Cruise: Fun-Loving Brits at Sea Double bill (r)
11.15 Cruising with Susan Calman Greece and the Aegean Sea (r)
12.15 pm Warship: Life in the Royal Navy Documentary looking at life in the Royal Navy (r)
1.10 Warship: Life in the Royal Navy Documentary (r)
2.10 FILM The Hunt for Red October (PG, 1990) Cold War thriller starring Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin
4.55 The Day The Queen Died: Minute by Minute The events of September 8, 2022, from early signs of concern to the interruption of Parliament and the royal family converging on Scotland (r)
6.25 5 News Weekend

Live NFL is back on 5 (9pm)

6.30 Sweets & Treats We Loved & Lost Much-missed treats from the 1970s and '80s including Texan Bars, Tooty Frooties, Fruit Salads, Flying Saucers, Pacers, Horror Bags and hedgehog flavour crisps (r)

8.00 22 Kids & Counting New series. Return of the documentary following supersized family the Radfords, with Sue agreeing to spend World Book Day dressed as a grasshopper

9.00 Live NFL on 5: Minnesota Vikings v Green Bay Packers (Kick-off **9.25**). Dermot O'Leary is joined by Sam Quek and Osi Umenyiora to present coverage of the week one match between the NFC North teams, held at US Bank Stadium. The Vikings claimed a 16-3 victory when the teams met here last season, but the Packers narrowly finished above them to reach the play-offs, where they were eliminated by Chicago Bears in the wild card round

12.30 am Cops 12.55 Entertainment News 1.00 Cruise TV 2.00 Amazing Railway Adventures 2.50 Cruising with Susan Calman 4.35 The Wonderful World of Chocolate
5.35 Children's Shows

11.20pm The Sunday Show (r) **11.50 FILM Just Mercy (2019) 2.00am** Weather for the Week Ahead **2.05-6.00am** BBC News
STV 1.15-4.00pm Live STV Racing: From Doncaster **12.15-3.00am** Shop on TV **3.50-5.05am** Unwind with STV

S4C 5.05pm Rhun Ap Iorwerth: Y Tri Mis Cyntaf (r) **6.05** Ffermio (r) **6.40** Pobol y Cwm Omnibws **7.45** News **8.00** Dechrau Canu Dechrau Canmol **9.00** Cynefin (r) **10.00** Am Le i Fyw (r) **11.00-11.35** Nol o'r Dibyn gyda Iolo Williams (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Today at the Test England v Pakistan
8.00 Unmissable Moments at the Proms 2026 A selection of musical treats from a summer of music
10.00 Selina Thompson Remembers: Salt The performance artist looks back at the 2021 adaptation of her monologue
10.15 Salt Selina Thompson re-creates her monologue about the transatlantic slave trade
11.00 Stephen Tompkinson Remembers: The Deep Blue Sea The actor reflects on the 1994 adaptation of Terence Rattigan's play
11.15-12.55am The Deep Blue Sea A 1994 adaptation of Terence Rattigan's play starring Penelope Wilton and Colin Firth

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.55 pm Downton Abbey The family prepares for the arrival of the heir presumptive (S1, ep2)
2.55 Downton Abbey Mary is smitten by a handsome houseguest (S1, ep3)
4.00 Downton Abbey The fair arrives in the village (S1, ep4)
5.00 Downton Abbey Mary is introduced to a suitor (S1, ep5)
6.05 A Taste for Murder Crime drama (1/6)
7.05 A Taste for Murder A British tourist is found dead at the foot of a cliff (2/6)
8.05 Midsomer Murders A body is found surrounded by ritual symbols (S22, ep6)
10.00 Midsomer Murders A writers' group's secretary is killed on the eve of a novelist's visit (S1, ep2)
11.50-12.55am Wycliffe Drama (S5, ep6)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm EastEnders
7.30 EastEnders
8.00 EastEnders
8.30 EastEnders
9.00 Great North Run Highlights Action from the half-marathon
10.00 Blue Lights
11.00 Blue Lights
12.00-1.00am Blue Lights

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

9.00am Live Solheim Cup Golf Singles on day three
1.55pm Live Formula 1 The Spanish Grand Prix
4.00 Live Super Sunday: Man United v Man City (Kick-off **4.30**)
7.00 Live US Open Tennis Coverage of the men's final
10.00-12.30am Live NFL

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

1.00 pm Cirque du Soleil: Varekai The circus company tells the story of Icarus
3.00 Classic Albums The Who's 1971 album *Who's Next*
4.00 The Who: Live at Hyde Park A 2015 performance
6.10 André Rieu: Romantic Paradise A performance in Cortona, Tuscany
8.00 FILM Breakfast at Tiffany's (PG, 1961) A struggling writer falls for a seemingly happy-go-lucky woman with a complicated past. Romantic comedy with Audrey Hepburn and George Peppard
10.15 Queen: Rock the World Documentary following the band
11.30-12.30am Grand Ole Opry: Opry Live With Chris Young, Gary Sinise & the Lt Dan Band, and Sara Evans

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

2.00 pm Underwater Grand Fishing Adventure
3.30 Fishing Allstars
4.00 Live E1 World Championship Coverage of the UIM E1 World Championship, the world's first electric powerboat racing series
5.35 Hot Shots
5.50 The Motorbike Show Henry Cole meets the California-based Brit who is reviving the American chopper
6.50 Hornblower Horatio prepares for his lieutenant exam
9.00 FILM Hang 'Em High (18, 1968) A former lawman survives being hanged for a crime he did not commit, and sets out to take revenge on the men who left him for dead. Western with Clint Eastwood
11.25-12.15am Lioness

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

5.50pm FILM Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (PG, 2002) Fantasy adventure
9.00 Big Brother: Live Launch New series. AJ Odudu and Will Best present. **See Pick of the Day**
10.35 Olivia Attwood: The Price of Perfection
11.35-12.05am Family Guy

TNT Sports 1

SKY 410, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

6.00am-10.00 Live AFLW
11.30-4.45pm Live European Le Mans Series
5.00-7.15 Live World Rally Championship The Rally Chile
7.30-9.45 Live Serie A: Sassuolo v Juventus
12.15am-3.00 Live MLB: San Francisco Giants v San Diego Padres (Start-time **12.20**)

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

2.00 pm A Place in the Sun Property in Lot-et-Garonne, south-west France
3.00 A Place in the Sun In Lanzarote
3.50 Come Dine with Me
6.20 Four in a Bed
6.55 Four in a Bed
7.25 Four in a Bed
7.55 Four in a Bed
8.25 Four in a Bed
9.00 Surgeons: Life in Their Hands A kidney transplant patient gets a second chance at life when the first operation fails
10.00 Police Rescue New Year's Eve results in a busy night for Police Rescue in Sydney
10.55 24 Hours in A&E A man injures his chest after a dizzy spell that caused him to fall down some steps
12.00-1.00am 24 Hours in A&E A 12-year-old is rushed to St George's after suffering a severe asthma attack

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.35 pm Call the Midwife
2.55 Catherine Cookson's Tilly Trotter Drama starring Carli Norris
5.00 Hetty Wainthropp Investigates Mystery drama (S4, ep2)
6.00 Hetty Wainthropp Investigates The sleuth uncovers bribery and corruption (S4, ep3)
7.00 Hetty Wainthropp Investigates Robert begins a career as a journalist (S4, ep4)
8.00 Sister Boniface Mysteries Great Slaughter Cricket Club's arrogant star player is murdered (S3, ep6)
9.00 Silent Witness Jack and Nikki enter a high security prison to investigate the suspicious death of an inmate (S24, ep1)
11.15-12.35am New Tricks An investigation leaves Sasha facing a dilemma (S10, ep10)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm Canal Boat Diaries
7.30 Canal Boat Diaries
8.00 Bangers & Cash A 1954 Morgan +4 coupe
9.00 Bangers & Cash Derek picks up a Hillman Avenger
10.00 Canal Boat Diaries
11.00 Canal Boat Diaries
12.00-1.00am Flipping Bangers A Suzuki SJ

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.45pm The Penguin (7/8)
7.45 The Penguin (8/8)
9.00 The Terror Thriller starring Ciaran Hinds. Two Royal Navy ships embark on a dangerous mission in the 19th century (S1, ep1)
10.00 The Terror (S1, ep2)
11.00-12.05am The Iris Affair Iris contacts Alfie (4/8)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

12.45 pm The Mark of Zorro (U, 1940) Swashbuckling adventure starring Tyrone Power
2.35 Western Union (U, 1941) Western with Randolph Scott and Robert Young
4.30 Christmas with the Kranks (PG, 2004) Festive comedy starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Tim Allen
6.35 Mrs Doubtfire (12, 1993) Comedy with Robin Williams and Sally Field
9.00 Escape from Pretoria (12, 2020) An activist hatches a daring escape plan to escape from a maximum-security prison using wooden keys. Drama starring Daniel Radcliffe
11.10-1.25am Vesper (15, 2022) Sci-fi adventure starring Raffiella Chapman and Eddie Marsan

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.40 pm FILM The Net (U, 1953) Thriller starring Phyllis Calvert
3.30 For the Love of Ada
4.00 The Man from UNCLE Solo and Kuryakin must protect a child genius
5.00 The Footage Detectives Behind the scenes footage from James Bond movie *A View to a Kill*
6.00 Enemy at the Door
7.00 FILM Home at Seven (U, 1952) Mystery, directed by and starring Ralph Richardson
8.45 FILM Smokescreen (U, 1964) Detective thriller starring Peter Vaughan
10.15 FILM Adventures of a Plumber's Mate (18, 1978) An amorous plumber searches for a golden toilet seat. Sex comedy starring Christopher Neil
12.00-1.05am The Heritage Chart Show

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.35pm Ancient Secrets of Althorp with Charles Spencer
7.35 Battlefield America
8.40 Battlefield America
9.45 Battlefield America
10.50 The Civil War's Lost Massacre Documentary
12.00-1.10am Ancient Secrets of Althorp with Charles Spencer

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

7.00pm Lockerbie
8.00 Chernobyl: The Lost Tapes Archive footage of the 1986 nuclear disaster
10.00 Salt Path: A Very British Scandal Allegations of factual inaccuracies in Raynor Winn's book
11.30-1.30am Rainbow Warrior Documentary

Monday 14

★ Picks of the day

Secrets of the Bayeux Tapestry
BBC2, 9pm

Michael Palin unpicks the Bayeux Tapestry

No, it's not a thinly disguised repeat of BBC4's French-made 2022 film *Mysteries of the Bayeux Tapestry*. The Beeb have splashed out on a Michael Palin-narrated celebration to mark the arrival of the most famous example of textile propaganda. Its journey and installation in the British Museum are punctuated by insights from historians on the pre-invasion succession struggle, the repercussions of the Normans' victory and the skills of English nuns. As our experts criticise the tapestry's version of history, there's no balancing Gallic perspective — perhaps because they "had their say" in the earlier documentary, or because a likeable French curator interviewed throughout was seen as a more than adequate ambassador for Normandy. John Dugdale

Forever Home
5, 9pm

When ITV adapted Graham Norton's novel *Holding* in 2022 it retained the Irish setting. This version of another Norton book switches it from Co Cork to Northumbria, so that most of the cast sound like refugees from *Vera*. At its centre are Douglas Henshall's Robert and Amy Nuttall's Carol, his younger partner who replaced a wife who disappeared. Robert's mental deterioration causes a crisis for Carol as his grown-up children want to sell the couple's house to pay for putting him in a care home. Whereas *Holding* was a murder mystery, *Forever Home* is less easy to categorise: partly a poignant study of living with dementia, partly social

Douglas Henshall as Robert and Amy Nuttall as his partner, Carol

comedy, partly a hinted horror thriller. Maybe these disparate genres will gel eventually, but part one feels like a bit of a mess. **JD**

Vigil
BBC1, 9pm

In the series finale Amy (Suranne Jones) and Kirsten (Rose Leslie) have returned to Scotland from Svalbard but still face enemies, perils and a shared dilemma — will they do the right thing? The biggest cliffhanger, though, is whether there will be a fourth series of *Vigil*, after the Caledonian coppers' implausible assignments in the Gulf and Arctic Norway. And if there is, will the set-up have any connection at all with the word "vigil"? **JD**

This Cultural Life
BBC4, 10.30pm

Recorded before she represented Britain at this year's Venice Biennale with her show about immigrant feelings of belonging, the Zanzibar-born Turner-prizewinning artist Lubaina Himid is on nostalgic form. She tells John Wilson how, with Sonia Boyce and Claudette Johnson, she showed in the 1985 exhibition *The Thin Black Line*, explaining how their artistic and political outlook differed from the Young British Artists. **Helen Stewart**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Morning Live Magazine
10.45 Rip Off Britain A charity that turned out to be a scam
11.30 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt In Taunton
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing At Witley Recycling Centre in Surrey
2.45 Escape to the Country Alistair Appleton helps newlyweds find a home in Shropshire (r)
3.45 Garden Rescue Charlie Dimmock revisits three of her favourite rescued gardens
4.30 Antiques Road Trip New series. Natasha Raskin Sharp and David Harper take part
5.15 Pointless Quiz show
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

Suranne Jones in Vigil (9pm)

7.00 The One Show Alex Jones and Roman Kemp present topical stories and celebrity chat
7.30 EastEnders Kat is devastated by what she discovers
8.00 Epstein: Money, Power, and Abuse A report into how Jeffrey Epstein ingratiated his way into the lives of the super-rich and then used their money to fund his global sex trafficking operation
9.00 Vigil ★ The detectives return to Scotland, where Amy finds herself on the wrong side of the law, and Kirsten puts her own life on the line to keep her safe. Last in the series. **See Pick of the Day**
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.40 Have I Got News for You With Richard Ayoade, Jack Dee and Kelly Cates (10/10) (r)
11.10 The Crime I Can't Forget How a young woman's testimony sparked a transnational investigation, leading detectives to dismantle a sex trafficking network across Northern Ireland, Sweden and Romania (2/7)
12.10 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.15 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.20 am Money for Nothing (r)
7.05 Sign Zone: Celebrity MasterChef (r) (SL)
8.10 Match of the Day (r)
9.00 BBC News
12.15 pm Politics Live
1.00 Impossible Quiz (r)
1.45 The Edge Game show (r)
2.30 Unbeatable Quiz (r)
3.00 Great British Railway Journeys Michael Portillo takes a trip in a Spitfire (r)
3.30 Eva Longoria: Searching for Mexico Exploring Mexico's history, food and culture (r)
4.15 Wild China Diverse wildlife (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Belfast (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games With Larry Dean (r)
6.30 Clive Myrie's Caribbean Adventure The newsreader heads west of Havana to the stunning Viñales Valley (r)

Michael Caine in Get Carter (11.05pm)

7.00 Global Eye Investigations from BBC correspondents all over the world
7.30 Mastermind Specialist subjects include Neil Young and Rory McIlroy
8.00 Only Connect The Marvins take on Merseyside Eyes
8.30 University Challenge A first-round match, with the Royal College of Art taking on UCL
9.00 Secrets of the Bayeux Tapestry: Inside the Museum ★ As the medieval embroidered cloth returns to the UK for the first time in 950 years, experts and historians unravel its secrets. **See Pick of the Day**
10.00 Colin from Accounts Ash and Gordon go to dinner (3/10)
10.30 Newsnight Presented by Victoria Derbyshire
11.05 FILM Get Carter (18, 1971) A racketeer returns to his native Newcastle to bury his brother and investigate the mysterious circumstances surrounding his death. Thriller starring Michael Caine and Ian Hendry
12.55 am Sign Zone: Countryfile A look at how the dry summer has impacted Cumbria's arable farmers (r) (SL)
1.50 Emergency 24/7 A pensioner arrives with burns (r) (SL)
2.50 Ludwig Mystery (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
9.30 Lorraine Entertainment news
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
12.30 pm Loose Women Discussion
1.30 ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and his team set up the dealers' den in Blackburn, where Matt Taylor makes an offer on a James Bond briefcase, and Tim Hogarth assesses some jewellery (r)
3.00 Lingo A woman and her boyfriend from Dartford, a mother and daughter, and an east London couple take part. Adil Ray hosts the quiz (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz show (r)
5.00 The Chase Quiz show hosted by Bradley Walsh
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Trigger Point's Vicky McClure (9pm)

7.30 Millionaire Hot Seat Quiz show hosted by Jeremy Clarkson (7/8) (r)
8.00 Emmerdale Charity's prison ordeal intensifies after a lockdown leads to a search
8.30 Coronation Street Shona's downfall proves to be a piece of cake for Jodie
9.00 Trigger Point With everything Lana and the team now know they must fight against the ticking clock to save thousands — perhaps even hundreds of thousands — of lives. Last in the series
10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
10.45 FILM Rush Hour 3 (12, 2007) An assassination attempt sets mismatched detectives Lee and Carter off on a mission to take on Triad gangs in Paris. Action comedy sequel starring Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker
12.15 am Shop on TV
3.00 The Rainmaker Bruiser learns that her father's murky history with Leo may complicate Dot's case (r) (SL)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Dickinson's Real Deal (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 2.00pm-4.00 Sign Zone (r) **7.00** Reporting Scotland: News at Seven **7.30** The Haggis Hunters: Our Lives (r) **8.00** The Great Food Guys (r) **8.30** Race Against the Tide **9.00** Banjo and Ro's Grand Island Hotel (r) **9.30** Banjo and Ro's Grand Island Hotel (r) **10.00** Two Doors Down (r) **10.30** The Scotts (r) **11.00** Scotcast **11.30pm-Midnight** Sacked in the Morning (r)

BBC2 N Ireland 10.00-10.30pm Ar an Sliabh. In Co Kerry, the kitchen of An Bóthar Pub at the foot of Cnoc Bhréanainn undergoes renovations, and a group of sea swimmers take to the water at Ballycastle in the Glens of Antrim (r)

The best guide to streaming
Pages 22-24

Dark comedy Kevin Can Fk Himself**
ITVX

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 American Pickers (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway (r)
2.10 Countdown With guest Marcus Brigstocke
3.00 A Place in the Sun From Carcassonne, France (r)
4.00 Help! We Bought a Village In Spain, a man battles to turn a derelict barn into a home
5.00 Four in a Bed At the Horse and Groom Inn in Milcombe
5.30 Come Dine with Me The first in a week of programmes from South Wales (r)
6.00 A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? A pair get cold feet when it is time to open their Spanish B&B

New series Geordie Coppers (10pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Fred's Ultimate Hotels Fred Sirieix heads to the French Alps to stay at Les Barmes de l'Ours, an extraordinary luxury hotel in the heart of Val d'Isère with access to the Olympic slopes

9.00 999: What Happened Next A young woman disappears after telling her parents she is meeting a friend, and the investigation goes from a suspected kidnapping to something even more sinister

10.00 Geordie Coppers New series. Documentary following Newcastle's Neighbourhood Police and their partners as they tackle crime, disorder and the challenges of keeping the city safe

11.00 24 Hours in A&E A 45-year-old is rushed in after an accident at a fun run, a 93-year-old is suffering from shortness of breath and a seven-year-old youngster is assessed after falling from a tree (1/7) (r)

12.05 am Walter Presents: The Twelve: Botox Murders
1.05 The Jury: 14 and on Trial for Murder (r) (SL) **2.00 Kitchen Nightmares USA** (r) **2.50 Dog House** (r) **3.45-4.40 Couples Come Dine with Me** (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM A Family Nightmare: Secrets on Maple Street (U, TVM, 2024) A teenager suspects her parents are hiding a secret after she is knocked out by an intruder. Thriller with Karis Cameron
4.00 Castle The author goes undercover as a French-Canadian immigrant (r)
4.55 Love Nature A profile of the Vincent Wildlife Trust and the greater horseshoe bat (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles Nick explores Peru via rail (r)
6.55 5 News Update

Police Interceptors' Tony (8pm)

7.00 Traffic Cops In Derbyshire, a suspected cloned car races through the countryside, dodging Stinger traps and mounting the pavement (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Police Interceptors A machete-wielding man on an e-bike causes mayhem on the streets of Northamptonshire. Officers pull over a motorist who is known to persistently drive without a licence

9.00 Forever Home New series. A woman grows suspicious when her partner, who has dementia, refuses to leave their home. Mystery with Amy Nuttall and Douglas Henshall. **See Pick of the Day** (1/6)

10.00 Murder Suspect No 1 A man is brutally beaten with a suspected knuckle duster in his own home in Hull and later dies in hospital, launching an intense and urgent murder inquiry. The police suspect the young woman who called the ambulance and must prove whether she is killer or witness (3/5) (r)

11.35 Murder Suspect No 1 The detectives try to find the killer ofJonathan Hutty (4/5) (r)

1.00 am Cruise TV (r) **2.00 Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles** (r)
2.55 Castle (r) **3.40 Cruising with Susan Calman** (r) (SL) **4.30-5.25 The Wonderful World of Chocolate** (r) (SL)

BBC1 Scotland 12.10am Scotcast (r) **12.40** Weather **12.45-6.00am** BBC News
STV 11.05pm Murder on a Knife's Edge: True Crime Presents. The case of Wayne Coventry, who was murdered in 2019 (r) **12.00-3.00** Shop **3.50-6.00am** Night Vision

S4C 6.00pm Arfordir Cymru: Sir Benfro (r) **6.30-6.59** Rownd a Rownd (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Y Sîn **8.25** Garddio a Mwy **8.55** News **9.00** Ffermio **9.33** Y Tywydd **9.35** Ralïo+. Action from the Rally of Chile **10.05** Y Deis (r) **10.35-11.40** Y Fets (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Spring: Earth's Seasonal Secrets Wildlife during the spring (4/4)
8.00 Britain's Lost Masterpieces Visiting Brighton Museum (S5, ep1)
9.00 Mastermind: 1977 The sixth heat
9.30 Call My Bluff With Diana Quick and Robert Powell
10.00 The Sky at Night The engineering that is transforming modern astronomy
10.30 Lubaina Himid: This Cultural Life John Wilson speaks to the artist and curator. **See Pick of the Day**
11.00 Romancing the Stone: The Golden Ages of British Sculpture The works of John Flaxman, Francis Chantrey and Alfred Gilbert (2/3)
12.00-1.00am Nature and Us: A History Through Art (3/3)

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm The Royal The hospital is threatened with closure (S1, ep6)
2.40 Wild at Heart Danny finds several dead animals on the reserve (S1, ep6)
3.40 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat The residents are terrorised by a blackmailer
6.55 Heartbeat A thief disguises himself as a police officer
8.00 Midsomer Murders A survivalist is found dead in a bombproof shelter (S23, ep1)
10.00 Downton Abbey Sybil's political interests lead her into danger (S1, ep6)
11.00 Scott & Bailey Janet interviews serial killer Geoff Hastings
11.50-12.55am Scott & Bailey Rachel is put further off the idea of marriage

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60
7.30 Deadly 60
8.00 The Great British Sewing Bee The semi-final
9.00 Fake Friend: The Ticket Scammer Documentary
10.00 Silent Witness
12.00-1.40am FILM Get Out (15, 2017) Thriller

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

6.30pm Live MNF: Leeds United v Newcastle United (Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage of the Premier League match from Elland Road
11.00pm-12.00m't Sky Sports News
1.00-4.30am Live NFL: Kansas City Chiefs v Denver Broncos (Kick-off **1.15**)

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 Painting Birds with Jim and Nancy Moir
4.00 Discovering: Susan Sarandon
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2024
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents At a gallery, aportrait gives a man a surprise
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents An antiques dealer comes up with a plan to raise money to pay off a loan
8.00 André Rieu: Dancing Through the Skies The violinist's concert from the Semper Opera House in Dresden
10.00-12.15am Classic FM Live: Summer Concert 2026 Dan Walker and Myleene Klass host

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.40 pm American Pickers Mike and Frank meet a demolition expert
2.40 American Pickers A collector with a Harley Knucklehead
3.45 The Sweeney A road accident victim proves to be a villain
4.50 The Professionals CI5 enters a deadly race with the KGB
5.55 Minder Arthur gets a chance to become respectable
7.00 IRT Deadliest Roads: The Andes New series. Three teams of truckers drive across the Andes
8.00 The Motorbike Show Henry Cole's restoration of a race bike reaches a climax
9.00 FILM Coogan's Bluff (15, 1968) Crime drama starring Clint Eastwood
11.05 Benidorm Mel and Madge arrange a beach wedding
11.35-12.05am Benidorm

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm Wheel of Fortune
8.00 The 1% Club Kids Special Lee Mack hosts
9.00 Big Brother Contestants live under surveillance, hoping to win a cash prize
10.00 Big Brother: The Group Chat New series. Interviews,
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am Family Guy

TNT Sports 1

SKY 410, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

6.30pm Serie A Highlights
7.30 Live Serie A: Inter Milan v Udinese (Kick-off **7.45**). Coverage from San Siro
9.45 UFC Breakdown
10.15 The Gruppetto
10.30 MLB Highlights
11.30-2.30am Live MLB: Cincinnati Reds v Los Angeles Dodgers (Start-time **11.40**)

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me In Birmingham
2.15 Four in a Bed
4.50 Car S.O.S The boys take on a rundown Renault Alpine GTA
5.50 Car S.O.S Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw restore a year 2000 Ford Mondeo
6.50 Grand Designs A couple plan to build a new family home in rural East Sussex almost entirely out of concrete
7.55 Grand Designs Converting a cowshed into a home
9.00 PopMaster TV Ken Bruce hosts the music quiz
10.00 999: On the Front Line Paramedics rush to save the life of a cyclist who has been crushed by a lorry
11.05-12.05am 999: On the Front Line Treating a man whose heart has stopped for more than 50 minutes

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.40 pm Classic EastEnders
2.20 Classic Neighbours
3.20 Sister Boniface Mysteries (S1, ep9)
4.20 Kingdom (S3, ep5)
5.20 As Time Goes By Sitcom (S4, ep10)
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S13, ep3)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S13, ep4)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Howard finds incriminating evidence (S13, ep5)
8.00 The Brokenwood Mysteries An avid cyclist suffers a massive coronary at the top of a local mountain (S5, ep3)
10.00 New Tricks An investigation leaves Sasha facing a moral dilemma (S10, ep10)
11.00 Copper A criminal terrorises the Sixth Ward (S2, ep1)
12.00-1.00am Lovejoy David Kossoff guest stars (S3, ep9)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm Mammals
8.00 Canal Boat Diaries Hawne Basin to Stourbridge
9.00 Canal Boat Diaries Stourton to Wolverhampton
10.00 Bangers & Cash A Royale Formula Ford race car
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash A Jensen Healey

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.35pm The Gilded Age Period drama (S1, ep1)
8.00 The Gilded Age Tom Raikes visits New York as Peggy seeks advice (S1, ep2)
9.00 FILM Mulholland Drive (15, 2001) David Lynch's mystery starring Naomi Watts
11.40-12.55am Succession Stars Brian Cox (S4, ep1)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.35 pm This Gun for Hire (PG, 1942) Thriller starring Alan Ladd
3.15 Anne of the Thousand Days (PG, 1969) Historical drama starring Richard Burton
6.05 Oliver! (U, 1968) An orphan falls in with a gang of pickpockets. Musical starring Ron Moody, Mark Lester and Oliver Reed
9.00 The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry (12, 2023) A man embarks on a 500-mile trek to see a terminally ill former work colleague. Drama starring Jim Broadbent and Penelope Wilton
11.10-1.50am Legends of the Fall (15, 1994) A man's fiancée moves into his remote family home. Period drama starring Anthony Hopkins and Brad Pitt

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.30 pm FILM School for Secrets (PG, 1946) Second World War drama with Ralph Richardson
3.35 FILM Brats (U, 1930) Comedy starring Laurel and Hardy
4.00 That's My Boy
4.35 FILM Seven Thunders (PG, 1957) Second World War drama starring Stephen Boyd
6.35 A Day Begins in Manchester
7.00 The Footage Detectives
8.00 Maigret A murder occurs in an inn
9.55 Bat Out of Hell Crime drama starring Sylvia Syms and John Thaw
10.25 Bat Out of Hell A cigarette case inexplicably appears in Diana's coat
10.55 Bat Out of Hell Mark and Diana plot
11.25 Bat Out of Hell
11.55-12.25am Bat Out of Hell Last in series

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.35pm The Bush Years: Family, Duty, Power
7.30 Türkiye's Astonishing Antiquities Documentary
8.35 Maps of Power
9.45 Ancient Greece: The Dark Chronicles
10.55 Türkiye's Astonishing Antiquities Documentary
12.00-1.10am Maps of Power

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm Be Water Bruce Lee's time filming in Hong Kong
8.00 Six Silent Killings: Ireland's Vanishing Triangle The disappearances of six women in the 1990s
10.00-12.10am FILM The Thin Blue Line (15, 1988) Documentary about a man wrongly convicted of murder

Tuesday 15

★ Picks of the day

70 Up
ITV1, 9pm

A farewell to these long-familiar faces

"When I grow up I want to be an astronaut, but if I can't be an astronaut I think I'll be a coach driver." Few quotes sum up Michael Apted's documentary series *Seven Up* like seven-year-old Neil Hughes's hopes for his future in 1964. Once captured in innocent black and white, the participants are now 70 years old. While there are moments of cheering positivity in this first part — the heroic story of Symon, who once wanted to be a film star, or Bruce's assessment of his retirement — there is a great deal of sadness and loss here. There are also broader ethical questions about children as subjects and the ways in which subjects feel they have been portrayed — but it's a fitting conclusion to a still remarkable experiment. Victoria Segal

The Royals: Time to Go?
Channel 4, 9pm

As a former BBC journalist and presenter of two of its flagship news programmes between 1981 and 2019 — the *Nine O'Clock News* and Radio 4's *Today* — John Humphrys bore witness to a tumultuous period in the history of British royalty, from the marriage of the Prince of Wales (now King Charles) to Lady Diana Spencer, and the anni horribiles that followed, to Andrew's *Newsnight* interview about his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein and his forced withdrawal from the public stage. Now 83, the avowed republican makes the case for abandoning the monarchy altogether. With public respect for the House of Windsor having declined in recent years,

King Charles III and Prince William attend Trooping the Colour

Humphrys shields his eyes from the cautionary tale across the Atlantic and declares it time for the UK to elect a president. **Helen Stewart**

The Great British Sewing Bee: The Final
BBC1, 8pm

"To win they have to do the best clothes, best sewing and creativity. For me that's the most important," says Esme Young as she prepares to judge the finale of this wholesome annual competition. No small task lies ahead of the finalists (Beth, Emma and Anna), who are making a bow tie and a cummerbund, beach club clothing fashioned from tablewear and a Met Gala-style outfit in the last made-to-measure. **HS**

The Martin Lewis Money Show
ITV1, 7pm

As an expensive summer rolls over into a challenging autumn, all part of the cost-of-living crisis, Martin Lewis and his Olympian colleague Jeanette Kwakye are back for this live special, ahead of a full series in October, the 15th since 2012. As ever, expect tips and hacks to mitigate price hikes and energy-bill spikes, questions from audience members and clear explanations of the fiscal news stories of the day. **VS**

This week's best live sport Page 25

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Morning Live Magazine
10.45 Rip Off Britain
11.30 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing Jacqui Joseph salvages a wardrobe and a television unit
2.45 Escape to the Country (r)
3.45 Garden Rescue Charlie Dimmock and Chris Hull tackle a strange-shaped garden in Taunton (r)
4.30 Antiques Road Trip Natasha Raskin Sharp and David Harper search for antiques in the south of Scotland
5.15 Pointless Quiz show
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

EastEnders' Kat (7.30pm)

7.00 The One Show With Alex Jones and Roman Kemp

7.30 EastEnders Kat tries to make sense of a situation

8.00 The Great British Sewing Bee: The Final The finalists compete for the crown, creating made-to-measure gala outfits on a theme of metamorphosis. **See Pick of the Day** (10/10)

9.00 Celebrity MasterChef The final week begins with a challenge in which the remaining five cooks create a two-course, canine-themed menu in celebration of the 135th anniversary of Crufts

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News

10.40 FILM **Sicario (15, 2015)** An FBI agent is forced to question everything she believes when she is recruited to an elite narcotics task force. Crime drama starring Emily Blunt and Josh Brolin

12.35 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.40 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Bargain Hunt (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: The Great British Sewing Bee (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
12.15 pm Politics Live
1.00 Impossible Quiz (r)
1.45 The Edge Game show (r)
2.30 Unbeatable Quiz (r)
3.00 Great British Railway Journeys Rye to Dungeness (r)
3.30 Eva Longoria: Searching for Mexico The actress explores Nuevo Leon (r)
4.15 Wild China Tibetan plateau (r)
5.15 Flog It! In Aberystwyth (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games Larry Dean, Kirsty Gallacher, Sam Quek and Lemn Sissay take part (r)
6.30 Clive Myrie's Caribbean Adventure The newsreader explores Trinidad (r)

Comedy Colin from Accounts (10pm)

7.00 Iolo's Anglesey Iolo Williams heads out to sea to look for Risso's dolphins (4/4) (r)

7.30 Race Against the Tide The semi-finalists create towering sand sculptures (5/6)

8.00 Saving Lives at Sea A mayday comes in from a French yacht 16-miles west of St Helier, in the Channel Islands (5/10)

9.00 Emergency 24/7 Trainee team leader Matt must organise the response to a man attacked with an iron bar. The plastics team face painstaking surgery when a carpenter arrives with severed fingers (5/6)

10.00 Colin from Accounts Gordon and Ash start to exchange flirty texts (4/10)

10.35 Newsnight Headline analysis, with Victoria Derbyshire

11.05 T20 Cricket England v Sri Lanka. The first game in the three-match series

11.40 Britain's Forgotten Girls The exploitation of girls by drug gangs across Britain and why it has been allowed to continue for over two decades (r)

12.40 am Sign Zone: Celebrity MasterChef (r) (SL)
1.40 Stolen Babies (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
9.30 Lorraine Entertainment news
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
12.30 pm Loose Women More celebrity interviews and topical debate from a female perspective
1.30 ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and the team are in Leeds, where James Layte is captivated by a snapshot of a man's military past (r)
3.00 Lingo Two married couples, and a brother and sister team take part in the word game (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz show (r)
5.00 The Chase Four more contestants pit their wits against one of the experts
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

The Martin Lewis Money Show (7pm)

7.00 The Martin Lewis Money Show: Live Martin discusses what the latest energy news means for people's bills. **See Pick of the Day**

8.00 Emmerdale Sadie manipulates Nicola, and Joe insists on a private funeral

8.30 Coronation Street Jodie's scheming lands Shona in hot water with David

9.00 70 Up First of a two-part final instalment of the documentary that started in 1964, meeting the people first seen as seven-year-olds as they reflect on life at 70. **See Pick of the Day** (1/2)

10.30 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News

11.15 Prescription for Murder: True Crime Presents Examining the case of Evie Adams, a woman who seeks a loving family, but finds a man with a deadly secret (r)

12.10 am Shop on TV
3.00 70 Up Final instalment of the documentary as its subjects reflect on life at 70 (r) (SL)
4.20 Unwind with ITV
5.10 Dickinson's Real Deal The team are in Leeds (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland **7.00pm** Reporting Scotland **7.30** Life on the Bay (r) **8.00** This Farming Life (r) **9.00** Paramedics on Scene (r) **10.00** Strike! The Village That Fought Back (r) **11.00** Scotcast **11.30pm-Midnight** Eat the Town (r) BBC2 Wales **1.45pm** First Minister's Questions **2.45** The Edge (r) **3.30** Unbeatable (r) **4.00** Great British Railway Journeys. Hassocks to Benenden (r) **4.30-5.15pm** Eva Longoria: Searching for Mexico (r) BBC2 N Ireland **10.00pm** Colin from Accounts **10.30-10.35pm** The Chronicles of Strangford (r) BBC1 Scotland **10.40pm** Sportscene **11.25** Scotcast (r) **11.55 FILM Sicario (2015) 1.50am** Weather

The best of the week's films on TV

Pages 26-27

Emily Blunt in the crime drama Sicario
BBC1, 10.40pm

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 American Pickers (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway (r)
2.10 Countdown
3.00 A Place in the Sun A Staffordshire pair seek a property in central France (r)
4.00 Help! We Bought a Village A couple rush to rescue another building at risk of collapse
5.00 Four in a Bed At Four Bells Glamping in Suffolk
5.30 Come Dine with Me An account executive serves dinner in his pub (r)
6.00 A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? A pair of restaurateurs try to strike a better work-life balance

Tinker the dog and Georgia (8pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 The Dog House A Great Dane comes to Woodgreen looking for a friend to take home and a family has a double date with a Labrador and a German shepherd puppy (3/6) (r)

9.00 The Royals: Time to Go? John Humphrys argues the monarchy has had its day and puts forward his case for electing a president as head of state. **See Pick of the Day**

10.00 Gogglebox The armchair critics share their opinions on what they have been watching during the week, with cameras capturing their instant reactions (r)

11.05 Celebrity Gogglebox The VIP viewers give their thoughts on *The Nevermets*, *A Quiet Place*, *Outrageous Homes*, *King of Collectibles: The Goldin Touch*, *Beat the Chasers* and *Top of The Pops 1992* (4/6) (r)

12.05 am Love Cheats 1.05 Taskmaster 2.00 The Great Celebrity Pottery Throw Down 3.05 Kitchen Nightmares 3.55 Millionaire Hoarders 4.50 Find It, Fix It, Flog It 4.55 Come Dine with Me 5.50 Countdown

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM Lies and Ex-Wives: Secrets on Maple Street (PG, TVM, 2024) A woman starts dating her divorced neighbour, only for her fiancé's ex-wife to turn up dead. Thriller with Ali Liebert and Matthew MacCaull
4.00 Castle The Greatest Detective Society requests Castle's help in solving a murder (r)
4.55 Love Nature Sea glass on Seaham beach (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles Nick explores Prague, Bratislava and Budapest (r)
6.55 5 News Update

A shift with the Motorway Cops (8pm)

7.00 Police Interceptors Officers pursue a vehicle with obscured number plates and it charges off the wrong way down the A46 (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders After receiving intel about a vehicle linked to the supply of drugs, PC Ed Clarke hunts for the suspect Skoda on the M6

9.00 Forever Home A shocking event leaves Carol trembling and terrified, especially as Robert's behaviour grows increasingly erratic and menacing (2/6)

10.00 Killed by My Daughter: Murdered in Paradise The true story of a daughter and her boyfriend's plot to murder her mother, Sheila von Wiese-Mack, while they were on a luxury holiday in Bali (r)

11.15 Buried Secrets: The Body in the Carpet The detective work that solved the case of 15-year-old Karen Price (r)

12.15 am Motorway: Hell on the Highway (r) **1.10 Cruise TV** (r)
2.10 Amazing Railway Adventures (r) **3.05 Castle** (r) **3.55 Cruising with Susan Calman 4.45 The Wonderful World of Chocolate 5.50 Mixmups**

1.55-6.00am BBC News **ITV1 Wales** **11.15-12.10am** Sharp End. Discussion on the latest developments in Welsh politics **STV 11.35pm** G'wed. Reece finds his debating voice as The Brimble's mask slips (r) **12.10-3.00am** Shop on TV. Teleshopping

4.20-6.00am Night Vision **UTV 11.15-12.10am** View from Stormont **S4C 6.00pm** Y Sîn (r) **6.30-6.59** Codi Hwyl (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Pobol y Cwm **8.25** Rownd a Rownd **8.55** News **9.00** Am Le i Fyw **10.00** Clwb Rygbi **10.30-11.35** Y Cosmos (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Fred Dibnah's Building of Britain The construction of Britain's canals (5/6)
7.30 The Lakes with Paul Rose Exploring Windermere (1/4)
8.00 To the Manor Born
8.30 Keeping Up Appearances
9.00 The Boleyns: A Scandalous Family The rise and fall of the Boleyns (1/3)
10.00 The Beginning and End of the Universe Professor Jim Al-Khalili unravels the cosmic mystery of science's creation story (1/2)
11.00 Japan's Master of Restoration Koji Mayuyama and his son Yu restore a ceramic horse from the Edo period (2/3)
11.50-12.20am The Sky at Night The engineering that is transforming modern astronomy

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm The Royal A coach crash has serious implications (S1, ep7)
2.40 Wild at Heart Leopard's Den prepares to host a wedding (S2, ep1)
3.40 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat Oscar finds himself in an awkward position
6.55 Heartbeat Merton investigates a suspicious death
8.00 Vera The detective investigates the discovery of an unidentified teenage boy's body in a shipyard
10.00 Downton Abbey The household is rocked by an announcement (S1, ep7)
11.30-12.25am Scott & Bailey Andy punishes Janet by keeping her out of an investigation

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60
8.00 Top Gear
9.00 The Devil in the Family: The Fall of Ruby Franke Triple bill. The story of the vlogger who was arrested for child abuse in 2023
11.35-12.25am To Catch a Stalker Documentary

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

6.00pm Live International T20 Cricket: England v Sri Lanka The first T20 in the three-match series from Utilita Bowl in Southampton
7.00 Live EFL Cup: Liverpool v Tottenham Hotspur (Kick-off **8.00**)
10.45 Paper Talk
11.00-12.00m't News

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 Painting Birds with Jim and Nancy Moir
4.00 Discovering: Christopher Plummer
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2024 With Andy Serkis and Lorraine Ashbourne
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
8.00 Garbo: Where Did You Go? Noomi Rapace narrates a portrait of Hollywood icon Greta Garbo
9.55 Wonderland: From JM Barrie to JRR Tolkien The worlds created by authors of children's books
10.55 The Movies American cinema in the 1980s
11.55-1.55am Alec Guinness: A Class Act A look at the career of the actor

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.40 pm American Pickers The pair meet a man who claims to have psychic powers
2.40 American Pickers A cuddly horse gets an impressive valuation
3.45 The Sweeney A business tycoon is blackmailed
4.50 The Professionals Doyle investigates a protection racket
5.55 River Monsters The fearsome freshwater sawfish of the Australian Outback
6.30 World Rally Championship Highlights The Rally of Chile. Action from the 12th round
7.30 Live EFL Cup: Liverpool v Tottenham Hotspur (Kick-off **8.00**) All the action from the third-round encounter at Anfield
10.25-12.25am All Elite Wrestling: Collision Hard-hitting action

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm Wheel of Fortune
8.00 The 1% Club
9.00 Big Brother A group of contestants live under 24-hour surveillance, hoping to win a cash prize
10.00 Big Brother: The Group Chat Exclusive interviews
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am Family Guy

TNT Sports 1

SKY 410, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

12.30pm-2.30 Live Cycling: Men The Tour of Abruzzo
7.00 Premier League
8.30 Uefa Champions League
9.00 WRC Review
10.00 Premier League Reload
10.15 MotoGP Rewind
10.30 Uefa Europa League & Conference League Magazine
11.00-12.00m't MLB

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me In Southampton
2.15 Four in a Bed
4.50 Car S.O.S Tim and Fuzz take on the task of restoring a 1953 Riley RMF
5.50 Car S.O.S Breathing new life into a 1973 Porsche 911 Targa
6.50 Grand Designs Transforming an underground water reservoir near the Humber Estuary into a family home
7.55 Grand Designs A cutting-edge home by the River Thames
9.00 Popmaster TV: Grand Final Ken Bruce hosts the final of the music quiz. Last in the series
10.00 24 Hours in A&E A 47-year-old man has critical injuries to his arm and leg
11.05-12.05am 24 Hours in A&E A cancer patient develops a swelling in her throat

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.40 pm Classic EastEnders
2.20 Classic Neighbours
3.20 Sister Boniface Mysteries (S1, ep10)
4.20 Kingdom (S3, ep6)
5.20 As Time Goes By
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S13, ep6)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S14, ep1)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Compo tries to serenade Nora Batty (S14, ep2)
8.00 'Allo 'Allo! Rene arranges to sell the Fallen Madonna painting (S6, ep6)
8.40 'Allo 'Allo! (S6, ep7)
9.20 'Allo 'Allo! (S6, ep8)
9.55 New Tricks An old friend asks Gerry to investigate the murder of his grandson (S11, ep1)
11.15-12.15am Copper More corpses of young men are found, while other teens continue to disappear (S2, ep2)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm Planet Earth II
8.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
9.00 Bangers & Cash Derek travels to Southwold to pick up a superb Hillman Avenger
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash A Triumph Herald

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.55pm The Gilded Age Double bill (S1, ep3&4)
9.00 The Looming Tower Shaughnessy and Bennet find one of the terrorists (3/10)
10.00 The Looming Tower Diane makes an important discovery (4/10)
11.00-12.10am Das Boot War drama. In German (S1, ep4)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.20 pm The Black Arrow (U, 1948) Swashbuckling adventure starring Louis Hayward
2.55 Arizona Raiders (U, 1965) Western starring Audie Murphy
4.45 Destination Gobi (U, 1953) Second World War adventure starring Richard Widmark
6.35 Gemini Man (12, 2019) Action drama starring Will Smith
9.00 The Greatest Hits (12, 2024) A record producer is magically propelled back in time every time she hears a musical cue from a four-year romance. Fantastical romantic drama starring Lucy Boynton
10.55-12.40am Premium Rush (12, 2012) Thriller with Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Michael Shannon

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.30 pm FILM Seance on a Wet Afternoon (PG, 1964) British thriller starring Kim Stanley and Richard Attenborough
3.45 What's on TPTV with Noel Previews
4.00 That's My Boy
4.35 FILM The Calendar (U, 1948) Drama starring Greta Gynt
6.10 Look at Life
6.25 Whiplash
6.55 The Man from UNCLE
7.55 Buccaneer Redair risks losing a lucrative new contract after double booking the aircraft
9.00 FILM The Hound of the Baskervilles (15, 2002) Sherlock Holmes adventure starring Richard Roxburgh
11.00 Fortean TV
11.35-1.40am FILM The Proposition (18, 2005) Australian Western starring Guy Pearce

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.35pm The Bush Years: Family, Duty, Power
7.25 Türkiye's Astonishing Antiquities
8.35 Maps of Power
9.45 Ancient Greece: The Dark Chronicles
10.55 Türkiye's Astonishing Antiquities
12.00-1.10am Maps of Power

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm FILM Apollo 11 (U, 2019) The moon landings
7.50 My Icon: Leon Pryce
8.00 FILM Spitfire (PG, 2018) The story of British single-seat fighter plane the Supermarine Spitfire
10.00 FILM Bobby (PG, 2016)
12.00-2.00am Savage Mountain Documentary

Wednesday 16

★ Picks of the day

Middlemarch
BBC4, 10pm

A masterclass in reviving a classic

For his first attempt at adapting a classic, Andrew Davies chose what many regard as the greatest English novel. He re-energised the sedate pace of George Eliot's text into a compelling drama that never lost sight of her key theme of social reform in the 1830s. Juliet Aubrey (*pictured with Patrick Malahide*) made for a warm and attractive heroine, Dorothea, with Rufus Sewell as her love interest, Will Ladislaw. Prior to a screening of the first two episodes (there are six, available on iPlayer), Davies looks back on his adaptation, which he only did after first taking the idea to make *Pride and Prejudice* to the BBC. "If you do *Middlemarch* first, I'll let you," the BBC's head of drama Michael Wearing said. He did and the rest is history. Ben Dowell

Grand Designs
Channel 4, 9pm

After 27 series, this property show holds few surprises for the dedicated viewer. Bad weather, worse finances, over-ambitious glazing, underwhelming carpentry: no matter how rococo the plans, how dramatic the spending ("contingency" be damned), the story tends to follow a familiar blueprint, Kevin McCloud raising a sceptical eyebrow every step of the way. That holds true for tonight's episode, which follows Matt and Bryony as they start work on their environmentally friendly family home in north Cornwall, the frivolity of "disco bathroom" and automated laundry system balancing out the 242 hand-built wooden trusses. Yet the spanner in their works is endearingly meta — their dream sea view is threatened by their neighbours' equally ambitious project. **VS**

Kevin McCloud returns to present the 28th series of Grand Designs

EFL Carabao Cup Live
ITV1, 7.30pm

Manchester United play host at Old Trafford to Brighton (kick-off 8pm), in a third-round tie with a bit of a backstory — available for the Red Devils is the midfielder Carlos Baleba, whom they poached from the Seagulls for £70 million this summer. Sky Sports+ has the Midlands derby (now an all-Premier League affair) between Coventry City and Aston Villa at the CBS Arena (8pm).
John Dugdale

England 'til I Die
Channel 4, 10pm

From the makers of *Ukraine: Enemy in the Woods*, this promises to "take viewers inside the world of the far-right", and show "what happens to an ordinary man and a small English town when a divisive national policy arrives on their doorstep". It follows Liam, who is transformed from a rank-and-file protester to campaign leader when plans are leaked to house up to 600 male asylum seekers in a former military camp in his home town in East Sussex. **JD**

This week's seven-day radio guide Pages 42-43

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Morning Live Magazine
10.45 Rip Off Britain
11.30 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing Sarah Moore salvages bed sheets
2.45 Escape to the Country A couple from Scotland look for a property in the Cotswolds (r)
3.45 Garden Rescue The team transform a space with greenery but no plants
4.30 Antiques Road Trip Natasha Raskin Sharp and David Harper search for treasure in Tyneside, including cutlery
5.15 Pointless Quiz show
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

A visit to The Repair Shop (8pm)

7.00 The One Show Presented by Alex Jones and JB Gill
7.30 EastEnders Vinny's 30th birthday party is de-railed
8.00 The Repair Shop: Beyond the Barn Chris Shaw restores a trunk that belonged to Paul O'Grady, Kirsten Ramsay rebuilds a memorial statue and Mark Stuckey revives a 1960s valve amp (3/8)
9.00 Celebrity MasterChef Grace Dent and Giorgio Locatelli ask the finalists to reimagine their signature dishes from day one, with the best ones cooking for the chef's table
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.40 FILM Sicario 2: Soldado (15, 2018) Agent Matt Graver re-teams with Alejandro Gillick to fight enemy forces involved in the drug war on the US-Mexico border. Thriller sequel starring Josh Brolin and Benicio Del Toro
12.35 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.40 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Garden Rescue (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Great Continental Railway Journeys (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
12.15 pm Politics Live
1.00 Impossible Quiz (r)
1.45 The Edge Game show (r)
2.30 Unbeatable Quiz (r)
3.00 Great British Railway Journeys Rye to Dungeness (r)
3.30 Eva Longoria: Searching for Mexico The Yucatan (r)
4.15 Wild China Animals inhabiting the Tibetan plateau (r)
5.15 Flog It! In Aberystwyth (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games With Larry Dean, Kirsty Gallacher, Sam Quek and Lemn Sissay (r)
6.30 Clive Myrie's Caribbean Adventure Clive explores Cuba's oldest city Baracoa (r)

Anna Maxwell Martin (9pm)

7.00 Celebrity Antiques Road Trip The actors Michael Brandon and Glynis Barber join the experts Roo Irvine and Izzie Balmer in their yellow Ford Thunderbird, antiques hunting from Kendal to Keswick (r)
8.00 Inside the Factory Paddy McGuinness visits the Clays book factory to learn how they produce 3 million books every week and follow the production of 20,000 copies of *Pride and Prejudice* (5/6) (r)
9.00 Who Do You Think You Are? The actress Anna Maxwell Martin travels to the town in Northern Ireland where her father grew up, discovering the story of her grandfather's childhood (4/5) (r)
10.00 Red Dwarf The crew discover their time on Red Dwarf was only a game (6/6) (r)
10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis with Victoria Derbyshire
11.00 Unspun World with John Simpson The week's major global news stories
11.35 Emergency 24/7 A man arrives after being hit with an iron bar in an attack (5/6) (r)
12.35 am Sign Zone: Celebrity MasterChef The remaining six cooks face a brand new challenge — the MasterChef auction (r) (SL)
1.35 Britain's Forgotten Girls Documentary (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
9.30 Lorraine Entertainment news
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat and lifestyle features
12.30 pm Loose Women Debate from a female perspective
1.30 ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal The team values antiques in Llangollen, Denbighshire, where items of interest include a milking stool and a saucy movie poster (r)
3.00 Lingo A husband and wife, a mother and daughter, and a bookworm and his partner take part in the quiz (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz (r)
5.00 The Chase Quiz show hosted by Bradley Walsh
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Brighton's Lewis Dunk (8pm)

7.30 Live EFL Carabao Cup: Manchester United v Brighton & Hove Albion (Kick-off **8.00**). Mark Pougatch presents all the action from the third-round tie at Old Trafford. United have won this trophy on six occasions, with the most recent of those triumphs coming in 2024. Although Brighton have established themselves in the Premier League over the past decade, a major trophy still continues to elude them, with their 1983 FA Cup final defeat at the hands of today's opponents still the closest they have come. With commentary by Sam Matterface, and pitchside reports from Gabriel Clarke. **See Pick of the Day**
10.25 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
11.15 Peston Political magazine show with Robert Peston
11.55 British Touring Car Championship Highlights Action from Croft Circuit
1.10 am Shop on TV
3.00 Pictionary (r) (SL)
3.25 Bradley & Barney Walsh: Breaking Dad (r) (SL)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Dickinson's Real Deal (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven **7.30** Scotland's Home of the Year 2023 (r) **8.00** Island Crossings (r) **9.00** Wild Horses, the Rockies and Me. Gordon Buchanan searches for wild horses in Canada (r) **10.00** Selling Scotland. A look at Scotland's most memorable adverts (r) **11.00** Scotcast **11.30pm-Midnight** The Trials That Shocked Scotland (r)

BBC1 N Ireland 10.40pm The Big Deal with Steph McGovern. The finalists compete for £50,000 of British art. Last in the series **11.40 FILM Sicario 2: Soldado (2018)** Thriller sequel starring Josh Brolin and Benicio Del Toro **1.35-6.00am** BBC News

The best guide to streaming
Pages 22-24

Gary Oldman returns in season six of Slow Horses
Apple TV

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 American Pickers (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway (r)
2.10 Countdown
3.00 A Place in the Sun On the Greek island of Lefkada (r)
4.00 Help! We Bought a Village A remote Spanish mountaintop village is hit with supply issues
5.00 Four in a Bed Visiting Bredon View Glamping Retreats, in Worcestershire
5.30 Come Dine with Me A nutritious dinner party on the third night in south Wales (r)
6.00 A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? French motorcycle tour owners try to rev up their profits

Documentary England 'til I Die (10pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It: Brilliant Builds Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer revisit a sprawling semi in Whitley Bay and a clumsy new-build in Stevenage

9.00 Grand Designs New series. Kevin McCloud meets a couple who have given themselves just one year to complete a California-style beach house on the Cornish coast. **See Pick of the Day**

10.00 England 'til I Die Documentary from the front line of Britain's asylum system, charting one man's journey into the far-right movement in real time. **See Pick of the Day**

11.05 999: What Happened Next A young woman disappears after telling her parents she is meeting a friend, and the investigation goes from a suspected kidnapping to something more sinister (r)

12.10 am Love Cheats (r) (SL)
1.05 Crime Scene Cleaners (r) (SL)
2.00 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) (SL) **2.50 FILM Dreamland (15, 2020)** (SL)
4.30-5.00 Britain's Most Expensive Houses (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM Dial: For Murder (15, TVM, 2023) Stacey hears the death of a woman over a pocket dial from her husband. When he comes home, he claims to have lost his phone. Mystery thriller starring Kirsten Comerford
4.00 Castle A recruiting officer at the NYPD Academy is killed (r)
4.55 Love Nature Restoring the land at Cave Hill Country Park (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles The presenter travels from Mount Vesuvius to Mount Etna (r)
6.55 5 News Update

Thriller Dial: For Murder (2.20pm)

7.00 Heat Pumps: Should You Get One for Winter? Alexis Conran investigates whether heat pumps live up to the hype, exploring the pros and cons (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Call the Bailiffs: Time to Pay Up Enforcement Agents attend an outdoor paving supplies company to recover a debt of nearly £3,000

9.00 Forever Home Sally's secret relationship with Patrick intensifies as a near discovery raises the stakes, forcing Sally to confront the reality of what she has gotten involved with. Drama with Amy Nuttall (3/6)

10.00 A&E: Crash Scene Emergency A professional MotoGP rider suffers an open fracture on his foot after being involved in a high speed pile up, while a patient is suffering from multiple rib fractures (r)

11.05 Ambulance: Code Red A doctor and a critical care paramedic are dispatched to help a 42-year-old who has broken his leg from a fall at the Royal Mail sorting office (r)

12.05 am A&E After Dark (r)
1.00 Cruise TV (r) **2.00 Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles** (r) **2.50 Castle** (r)
3.35 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
4.25-5.15 The Wonderful World of Chocolate (r) (SL)

BBC2 N Ireland 11.00pm Colin from Accounts **11.35** Unspun World with John Simpson **12.10-12.35am** BBC News **BBC1 Scotland 12.35am** Scotcast (r) **1.05** Weather **1.10-6.00am** BBC News **STV 11.35pm** Peston **12.15-3.00am** Shop

3.50-5.05am Unwind with ITV **S4C 6.00pm** Trysorau Cymru: Tir, Tai a Chyfrinachau (r) **6.30-6.59** Rownd a Rownd (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Pobol y Cwm **8.25** Gwalia Aleighcia **8.55** News **9.00** Athrawon **10.00** Y Deis (r) **10.30-11.35** Llanw (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Fred Dibnah's Building of Britain The achievements of 19th-century builders. Last in the series
7.30 The Lakes with Paul Rose Visiting Derwentwater and Borrowdale (2/4)
8.00 Operation Grand Canyon with Dan Snow The re-creation of a pioneering expedition (2/2)
9.00 Lost Home Movies of Nazi Germany Amateur footage from the latter half of the war (2/2)
10.00 Andrew Davies Remembers: Middlemarch Andrew Davies looks back on his BBC adaptation of *Middlemarch*. **See Pick of the Day**
10.15 Middlemarch Period drama starring Douglas Hodge. **See Pick of the Day** (1/7)
11.40pm-12.35am Middlemarch (2/7)

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm The Royal Dr Ormerod struggles to cope (S2, ep1)
2.40 Wild at Heart A British charity plans to release a Cape vulture back into the wild (S2, ep2)
3.40 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat Bellamy confronts painful memories
6.55 Heartbeat David enters a flower show
8.00 Midsomer Murders A newly arrived resident of a police retirement community is found dead. With Tom Conti (S23, ep2)
10.00 Downton Abbey Bates returns from London with life-changing news for Anna (S2, ep1)
11.30-12.25am Scott & Bailey Janet makes a gruesome discovery in an elderly couple's home

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 FILM Horrible Histories: The Movie (PG, 2019) Family comedy with Sebastian Croft
8.35 Top Gear Range Rover
9.35 Top Gear The best taxi
10.35-12.45am FILM Just Mercy (12, 2019) Fact-based drama starring Michael B Jordan and Jamie Foxx

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

7.00pm Live EFL Cup: Manchester United v Brighton & Hove Albion (Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage of the third-round match comes from Old Trafford
10.45 Paper Talk The stories dominating the headlines
11.00pm-12.00m't Sky Sports News

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 Painting Birds with Jim and Nancy Moir
4.00 Discovering: Jeff Bridges
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2024: Winner's Film
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
8.00 FILM The Lost Leonardo (15, 2021) Documentary exploring the case of the missing Salvator Mundi
9.55 Beyond the Brush Goya's Saturn Devouring His Son
10.25 Beyond the Brush Bosch's The Garden of Earthly Delights.
10.55 The Nineties Bill Clinton's presidency
11.55-12.55am Art's Wildest Movement: Mannerism

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.30 pm American Pickers Mike and Frank suffer slow sales
2.30 American Pickers Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz have high hopes for a pinball machine
3.30 The Sweeney A boy is kidnapped
4.35 The Professionals CI5 targets an unethical consortium
5.40 Minder Terry's pal is framed for a crime
6.50 Sharpe Adventure starring Sean Bean
9.00 FILM Rocky (12, 1976) A struggling boxer gets the chance to take on the world heavyweight champion. Boxing drama starring Sylvester Stallone
11.25 River Monsters The fearsome freshwater sawfish of the Australian Outback
12.00-12.55am EFL Carabao Cup Highlights Action from the third-round

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm Wheel of Fortune
8.00 The 1% Club Quiz game show hosted by Lee Mack
9.00 Big Brother A group of contestants live under 24-hour surveillance
10.00 Big Brother: The Group Chat Exclusive interviews
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am Family Guy

TNT Sports 1

SKY 410, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

12.30pm-2.30 Live Cycling: Men The Tour of Abruzzo
3.15 -6.00 Live Men's Cycling Pro Series The 2026 Skoda Tour of Luxembourg
7.00-10.30 Live Uefa Europa League Aleague phase match
12.30am-3.30 Live MLB: Chicago Cubs v Atlanta Braves (Start-time **12.40**)

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me Party in Cheshire
2.15 Four in a Bed
4.50 Car S.O.S The boys head to Somerset to restore a Jeep Grand Cherokee
5.50 Car S.O.S A 1986 Rover SD1 that ended up rotting away in a dirty lock-up
6.50 Grand Designs Visiting the longest build in Grand Designs history
7.55 Grand Designs A London home that resembles a giant stack of glass cubes
9.00 24 Hours in A&E A woman is brought in after crashing her car into a tree
10.00 24 Hours in A&E A man may have a bleed on the brain after hitting his head
11.05-1.40am 9/11: 102 Minutes That Changed America Amateur footage of the attacks

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.40 pm Classic EastEnders
2.20 Classic Neighbours
3.20 Sister Boniface Mysteries (S2, ep1)
4.20 Father Brown Crime drama (S1, ep1)
5.20 As Time Goes By Comedy (S5, ep2)
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S14, ep3)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S14, ep4&5)
8.00 The Chelsea Detective New series. The team investigates when a butler is found dead in the Thames (S4, ep1)
9.00 Father Brown A group of bikers causes outrage and excitement in equal measure (S10, ep9)
10.00 New Tricks The team investigates the murder of a junior doctor (S11, ep2)
11.00 Copper Corcoran closes in (S2, ep3)
12.00-1.00am Lovejoy Drama (S3, ep11)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm Planet Earth II
8.00 Guy Martin's Lancaster Bomber The presenter trains on the iconic aircraft
9.00 Explore Simon Reeve visits the Philippines
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash Three Datsun Zs

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

7.00pm The Gilded Age Period drama (S1, ep5)
8.00 The Gilded Age George fights to protect his public image (S1, ep6)
9.00 The Terror Thriller with Ciaran Hinds (S1, ep1)
10.00 The Terror (S1, ep2)
10.50 Task Thriller (4/7)
11.55-1.00am Task (5/7)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

12.45 pm Western Union (U, 1941) Western with Randolph Scott
2.40 The Last Wagon (PG, 1956) Western with Richard Widmark
4.40 Hell and High Water (PG, 1954) Cold War adventure starring Richard Widmark
6.45 The Monuments Men (12, 2014) Fact-based Second World War drama starring George Clooney
9.00 Greed (15, 2019) A fashion billionaire tries to save his reputation by holding a birthday party. Satirical comedy drama starring Steve Coogan
11.10-1.45am She Said (15, 2022) Two reporters break a story that shattered decades of silence around the subject of sexual assault in Hollywood. Fact-based drama starring Zoe Kazan

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.30 pm FILM The Net (U, 1953) Thriller starring Phyllis Calvert
3.15 Look at Life
3.30 Dial 999
4.00 That's My Boy
4.35 FILM Snowball (U, 1960) Drama starring Dennis Waterman
6.00 Rooms Two different women learn they have something in common
7.00 Out of Town How rakes are made
7.30 Dick Turpin Adventure starring Richard O'Sullivan
8.05 Van der Valk The daughter of a journalist is kidnapped
9.05 FILM The Odessa File (PG, 1974) Thriller starring Jon Voight and Maximilian Schell
11.40-1.30am FILM Up Pompeii (15, 1971) Comedy based on the television series with Frankie Howerd

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.35pm The Bush Years: Family, Duty, Power
7.30 Türkiye's Astonishing Antiquities An ancient route
8.35 Maps of Power
9.40 Ancient Greece: The Dark Chronicles
10.55 Türkiye's Astonishing Antiquities An ancient route
12.00-1.10am Maps of Power

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm I Am Heath Ledger
7.50 My Icon: Moeen Ali
8.00 The Yogurt Shop Murders: The End of Wondering A look at the conclusion to the case
10.00 The Ringleader: The Case of the Bling Ring
12.00-1.00am House of Kardashian Documentary

Thursday 17

★ Picks of the day

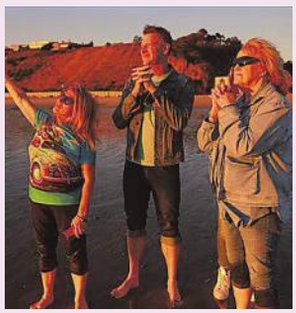
All Creatures Great and Small
5, 9pm

Gentle normality is restored in the Dales

Series six opened in May 1945, with war continuing in the Far East. As series seven begins a year later, uniforms have been mothballed and everyone is back in Skeldale House. So *All Creatures* can resume normal service: feeding nostalgia by portraying a mid-century rural idyll, at risk of putting viewers to sleep, while keeping them just about awake with storylines offering gentle challenges. James's (Nicholas Ralph) challenge is the arrival of a rival vet, Granville (Caolan McCarthy). Helen (Rachel Shenton) must make her dad reassess his farm's future. Siegfried (Samuel West) continues his slow-motion courtship of Dorothy (Maimie McCoy), and Tristan (Callum Woodhouse) has to persuade Charlotte (Gaia Wise) to stay in the Dales. John Dugdale

Hey Beautiful: Anatomy of a Romance Scam
BBC2, 9pm/9.45pm/11.35pm

Initially, this three-part series feels like *The Tinder Swindler*, the 2022 Netflix documentary. Although the women are older — and the scammer's MO is different — Roxy (in New England), Annette (in Canada) and Gaby (in Germany) all fall for the same man, who uses various names and claims to do various jobs. And there's a similar pattern to their stories, with the fraudster talking of travelling abroad for work, and then supposedly suffering a disaster that necessitates his beloved sending money. Eventually they become suspicious, and detective work enables them to identify their deceiver as "Brian Haugen", a handsome guy on Instagram aged about 45. But it's not as simple as that, as later instalments of tonight's triple bill reveal. **JD**



Romance scammer Brian with his victims Annette and Gaby

Long Lost Family
ITV1, 9pm

"If I got the chance to meet him," says Pat, now in her late seventies, who as a 15-year-old girl unwillingly handed her baby son over for adoption, "it would make me whole." Such are the stakes of this highwire act of a show, each potential slip nimbly handled by Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell. The focus is not on the parting but the reunion, and in this particular case of surprising bonds shared despite years of separation. **Helen Stewart**

Great Riviera Rail Trip
More4, 9pm

How much one enjoys a journey can often depend on how tolerable the companion is, but those intent on watching Sandi Toksvig travel around the French Riviera by train have had the chance to travel with her before. She's no Baedeker-wielding Portillo, with her perpetual burble, disregarding an 1870s medical journal's advice that women not travel by train lest their uterus dislocate. "I mean, I'm willing to take the risk," she says. **HS**

This week's streaming guide Pages 22-24

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Morning Live Magazine
10.45 Rip Off Britain
11.30 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing A sewing box is transformed
2.45 Escape to the Country Helping a retired army couple find a home in Norfolk (r)
3.45 Garden Rescue A garden in Congleton, Cheshire, that resembles a prison yard (r)
4.30 Antiques Road Trip Natasha Raskin Sharp and David Harper visit Durham
5.15 Pointless Quiz show hosted by Alexander Armstrong
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

Crime drama Ludwig (9pm)

7.00 The One Show With Alex Jones and Roman Kemp
7.30 EastEnders Kat makes a discovery, and Oscar is torn
8.00 Dragons' Den The businessmen and women are asked to invest in a spelt pasta business, a family-run inflatable pub venture, smart plant sensors and vegetable-packed instant soup
9.00 Ludwig John and Lucy struggle to see how their new information fits into what they already know. When a sushi bar turns into a crime scene, an unlikely witness helps John's investigations (5/6)
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.40 Question Time Topical debate, with a panel of politicians and other guests facing questions from the audience
11.40 Newscast Light-hearted discussion of political events
12.10 am The Repair Shop: Beyond the Barn Chris Shaw restores a trunk that belonged to Paul O'Grady, and Kirsten Ramsay rebuilds a wolf statue (r)
1.10 Weather for the Week Ahead
1.15 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Bargain Hunt (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Gardeners' World Capturing rainwater (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
12.15 pm Politics Live
1.00 Impossible Quiz (r)
1.45 The Edge Game show (r)
2.30 Unbeatable Quiz (r)
3.00 Great British Railway Journeys Exploring Walmer Castle, and Margate (r)
3.30 Eva Longoria: Searching for Mexico The actress heads to the state of Veracruz (r)
4.15 Wild China Ruined trade cities outside the Great Wall (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Ragley Hall (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games Penultimate round (r)
6.30 Clive Myrie's Caribbean Adventure The presenter explores Barbados (r)

Presenter Steph McGovern (8pm)

7.00 Escape to the Country A health-conscious couple from London enlist Sonali Shah to help them spend £1.3 million on a detached property in Surrey with enough land to create a wellness retreat (r)
8.00 The Big Deal with Steph McGovern It is the grand final for the last three aspiring art dealer pairs. Competing at Frieze Week, only one can win the top prize of £50,000 worth of British art. Last in the series
9.00 Hey Beautiful: Anatomy of a Romance Scam New series. Crime documentary featuring women who fall for the same man. **See Pick of the Day** (1/3)
9.45 Hey Beautiful: Anatomy of a Romance Scam A man is contacted by women claiming to be in love with him. **See Pick of the Day** (2/3)
10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis presented by Paddy O'Connell
11.05 T20 Cricket Highlights of England v Sri Lanka at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff
11.35 Hey Beautiful: Anatomy of a Romance Scam Last in the series. **See Pick of the Day**
12.20 am Sign Zone: Vigil The truth of Jia's discovery has dangerous consequences for the team (r) (SL)
1.20 Vigil Amy and Kirsten return to Scotland, only for danger to follow them (6/6) (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
9.30 Lorraine Entertainment news
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
12.30 pm Loose Women The women invite a celebrity guest to chat about what they are up to
1.30 ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and the team are in Blackpool, where Jo Brayshaw gets flattered into parting with her cash (r)
3.00 Lingo Looking for the winning words are a Spice Girls fan and his wife, Essex brothers and a stepdad and stepson (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Arcade-themed quiz show hosted by Ben Shephard (r)
5.00 The Chase Quiz show hosted by Bradley Walsh
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Helen Mirren stars in Red (10.45pm)

7.30 Heatwaves & Food Prices: Saving on Your Supermarket Shop? — Tonight Report
8.00 Emmerdale Charles attempts to comfort a grieving Nicola, while Billy confronts Joe
8.30 Coronation Street Kit encourages Bethany to pursue romance with Ryan
9.00 Long Lost Family A woman searches for the son she placed for adoption, while a person hopes to reunite with their paternal siblings. Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell host **See Pick of the Day**
10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
10.45 FILM Red (12, 2010) A retired CIA agent survives an assassination attempt, and reunites his old hit squad to find out who is trying to kill them and why. Action thriller starring Bruce Willis, Morgan Freeman, John Malkovich and Helen Mirren
12.35 am Shop on TV
3.00 The Chase Around the World The teams land in Lisbon to take on the Dark Destroyer and the Sinnerman (r) (SL)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Dickinson's Real Deal (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland **7.30** Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs (r) **8.00** Beechgrove Garden **8.30** Landward **9.00** Norwegian Fling (r) **10.00** Stevens & McCarthy (r) **10.30** Scot Squad (r) **11.00** Scotcast **11.30pm-Midnight** The Scotts (r) **BBC1 N Ireland 10.40pm** The View **11.20** Question Time **12.20am** Newscast **12.50** The Repair Shop: Beyond the Barn (r) **1.40** Weather **1.45-6.00am** BBC News **STV 7.30-8.00pm** What's on Scotland **1.50-6.00am** BBC News **BBC1 Scotland 2.00pm** Politics **3.00-3.45** Money for Nothing **11.40** Scotcast (r) **12.10am** Newscast **12.40** The Repair Shop: Beyond the Barn (r) **1.40** Weather **1.45-6.00am** BBC News

The best of the week's films on TV
Pages 26-27

Seydou Sarr stars in Io Capitano
Film4, 11.25pm

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 American Pickers (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway In Colwyn Bay, north Wales (r)
2.10 Countdown
3.00 A Place in the Sun A couple search for a new home in Charente, France (r)
4.00 Help! We Bought a Village The first overnight guests visit a unique Italian Trulli settlement
5.00 Four in a Bed The B&Bers stay at a manor in Bromley
5.30 Come Dine with Me The fourth night in south Wales (r)
6.00 A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? After losing everything in France, a bar owner tries to rebuild

Matt Lucas in Taskmaster (9pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Two Men on a Bike David Baddiel and Hugh Dennis pedal through France. Gearing up for their longest holiday together, they begin in a seaside resort on the Atlantic and head to Bordeaux (1/4) (r)

9.00 Taskmaster Another week in Taskmaster as Matt Lucas tries to conquer his vertigo, Chloe Petts makes use of a giant syringe and Richard Ayoade throws a doll's head at a gargoyle (3/10)

10.00 Apocalypse Reality challenge in which two groups of ordinary people must survive in a mock-up post-apocalyptic environment using the limited resources to hand. Chaos ensues as the first group enters from the West, while in the East, a second group hunts for food (1/8) (r)

11.20 Gogglebox The armchair critics share their opinions on what they have been watching during the week (r) (SL)

12.20 am Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) (SL) **1.05 Millionaire Hoarders** (r) **2.00** FILM **The Innocents (15, 2021)** Horror
4.00 Location, Location, Location (r) **4.55 Couples Come Dine with Me** (r) **5.50 Countdown** (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM **Married to a Stranger (12, TVM, 2025)** Tensions build when Bliss moves in with boyfriend Nathan and his two wives and it is not long before someone in her new family turns against her. Thriller with Emma Johnson
4.00 Castle Beckett and Castle are led back to an old investigation solved by Esposito (r)
4.55 Love Nature The Coastal Redwoods of Mid-Wales (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Amazing Railway Journeys with Nick Knowles Visiting Bran Castle (r)
6.55 5 News Update

The Yorkshire Vet (8pm)

7.00 The Secret Life of Bees Steve Backshall looks at aspects of bee species in the UK, from the industrious honeybee to the bold bumble bee (1/2) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 The Yorkshire Vet Peter Wright nurses an injured tawny owl and treats a calf's neck lump. At Cannon Hall Farm, Shona Searson scans two mares, hoping to continue a beloved Shire horse's legacy

9.00 All Creatures Great and Small ★ New series. It is 1946, and with the war finally over, a new vet in town threatens the status quo. Period drama starring Nicholas Ralph. **See Pick of the Day** (1/7)

10.00 Child Snatcher 3: Who Took Lynda & Dawn? In 1983, the quiet English village of Narborough was shattered by the rape and murder of 15-year-old Lynda Mann. Three years later, a second teenager, Dawn Ashworth, was found dead. Detectives involved in the original investigation recount the painstaking work that led to an unprecedented scientific breakthrough (r)

11.55 Fatal First Dates (r)

1.00 am Cruise TV (r)
2.00 Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles (r)
2.50 Castle Crime drama (r)
3.40 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.15 Entertainment News on 5
5.25 Children's Programmes

10.45 Heatwaves & Food Prices: Saving on Your Supermarket Shop? — Tonight **11.10 FILM Rush Hour 3 (2007) 12.40-3.00am** Shop **3.50-5.05am** Unwind **UTV 10.45pm** Up Close **11.15** Millionaire Hot Seat (r) **11.40** True Crime Presents (r) **12.25-12.35am** Hidden Northern Ireland (r) **S4C 6.00pm** Ralïo+ (r) **6.30-6.59** Rygbi (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Pobol y Cwm. Mathew wants answers **8.25** Rownd a Rownd **8.55** News **9.00** Pawb a'i Farn **10.00** Taclo'r Ty (r) **10.30-11.35** Radio Fa'ma (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Canals: The Making of a Nation The people who operated the canal boats during Victorian times (5/6)
7.30 Pubs, Ponds and Power: The Story of the Village Ben Robinson explores the history of Lavenham in Suffolk, which was one of the wealthiest places in England (2/6)
8.00 FILM **Lawrence of Arabia (PG, 1962)** An enigmatic British Army officer tries to unite the Arab nations against the Turks during the First World War. Oscar-winning epic drama starring Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif
11.30-12.10am David Lean: Talking Pictures An insight into the life of the film director, featuring rarely seen interviews

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm The Royal A suicidal teenager requires treatment (S2, ep2)
2.40 Wild at Heart A visitor shocks Du Plessis (S2, ep3)
3.40 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat Liz receives an exciting offer from Ben
6.55 Heartbeat Rosie goes on a blind date
8.00 Vera The detective investigates a businesswoman's dark secrets
10.00 Downton Abbey Carson suffers a panic attack in front of the family (S2, ep2)
11.10 Scott & Bailey A wealthy man leading a double life is murdered
12.00-1.00am Scott & Bailey Murder suspect Helen turns up on Janet's doorstep

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60 Double bill
8.00 The Cruise Double bill
9.00 Amanda & Alan's Italian Job The scruffy courtyard
9.30 Amanda & Alan's Italian Job The master bedroom
10.00 RuPaul's Drag Race UK
11.15-12.45am What It Feels Like for a Girl Double bill

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

8.30am Live DP World Tour Golf The PGA Championship
6.00pm Live International T20 Cricket: England v Sri Lanka From Sophia Gardens
10.30 Paper Talk
11.00 Sky Sports News
12.00-5.15am Live NFL: Buffalo Bills v Detroit Lions (Kick-off **1.15**)

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 Painting Birds with Jim and Nancy Moir
4.00 Discovering: Sean Connery
5.00 Best of Portrait Artist of the Year 2024
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A man's fiancée is killed
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A prince takes a romantic interest in a housewife
8.00 Discovering: Kate Winslet The life and career of the Oscar-winning actress
9.00 FILM **Murder by Decree (15, 1978)** Sherlock Holmes mystery starring Christopher Plummer
11.20-12.20am The Directors The life and work of Carol Reed

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.50 pm American Pickers Mike and Frank have one of the oddest haggling sessions
2.50 American Pickers Mike and Frank sort through three generations of clutter in Michigan
3.50 The Sweeney The Flying Squad trails a jewel thief
4.55 The Professionals Bodie and Doyle become bodyguards
6.00 Live Darts: World Series Finals Coverage of night one from AFAS Live in Amsterdam
10.00 Benidorm Mick upsets Janice during a trip to the Callosa waterfalls
11.00 Ligue 1 Highlights Featuring action from Ligue 1 matches
11.35-12.35am Black Sails Flint and Miranda brace for the worst as they sail towards Charlestown

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm Wheel of Fortune
8.00 The 1% Club
9.00 Big Brother A group of contestants live under 24-hour surveillance
10.00 Big Brother: The Group Chat Exclusive interviews with evicted housemates
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am Family Guy

TNT Sports 1

SKY 410, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

12.30pm-2.30 Live Cycling: Men The Tour of Abruzzo
3.15-6.00 Live Men's Cycling Pro Series The 2026 Skoda Tour of Luxembourg
7.00-10.30 Live Uefa Europa League League phase match
12.15-3.00am Live MLB: New York Mets v Philadelphia Phillies (Start-time **12.15**)

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me In Lancashire
2.15 Four in a Bed
4.50 Car S.O.S The boys take on an extremely rusty 1965 Mustang
5.50 Car S.O.S The boys pick up a 1978 JCB digger
6.50 Grand Designs A bricklayer in Bolton begins work on an ambitious state-of-the-art wooden home
7.55 Grand Designs Kevin McCloud revisits a woman who retired to southern Spain
9.00 Sandi Toksvig's Great Riviera Rail Trip ★ Sandi takes a tour of locations on the French coast. **See Pick of the Day**
10.00 24 Hours in A&E A teenager has a life-threatening bleed on the brain
11.05-12.10am 24 Hours in A&E Treating a 75-year-old man who fell out of bed

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.35 pm Classic EastEnders
2.15 Classic Neighbours
3.20 Sister Boniface Mysteries (S2, ep2)
4.20 Father Brown A drowning (S1, ep2)
5.20 As Time Goes By Comedy (S5, ep3)
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S14, ep6)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S14, ep7)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine (S14, ep8)
8.00 The Chelsea Detective The team digs deeper into the case of the deceased butler (S4, ep2)
9.00 A Remarkable Place to Die Anais finds evidence that her sister had been taking a Class A drug before she died (2/8)
10.00 New Tricks The team looks into a terrorist's death (S11, ep3)
11.00 Copper (S2, ep4)
12.00-1.00am Lovejoy Drama (S3, ep12)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm Planet Earth II
8.00 Bangers & Cash Dave heads to the south coast to pick up a Ford Escort
9.00 Dream Car Fixers A car for a 1940s enthusiast
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash A pair of Ford Capris

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

7.00pm The Gilded Age Edison's demonstration sparks conversation (S1, ep7)
8.00 The Gilded Age Peggy reveals the truth (S1, ep8)
9.00 Fightland Duke prepares for his shot at revenge (6/8)
10.00 Dune: Prophecy (3/6)
11.15-12.30am Succession Drama series (S4, ep6)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

12.45 pm Gun Fury (U, 1953) Western starring Rock Hudson
2.25 Tomahawk (PG, 1951) Western starring Van Heflin and Yvonne de Carlo
4.15 Robin and Marian (PG, 1976) Medieval adventure starring Sean Connery and Audrey Hepburn
6.25 The Beautiful Game (12, 2024) Sporting comedy drama starring Bill Nighy and Micheal Ward
9.00 The Theory of Everything (12, 2014) Biopic of Stephen Hawking, exploring his relationship with wife Jane and groundbreaking work in the face of deteriorating health. With Eddie Redmayne and Felicity Jones
11.25-1.45am Io Capitano (15, 2023) Drama starring Seydou Sarr and Moustapha Fall

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.30 pm The Duchess of Duke Street Louisa runs her hotel alone
2.35 FILM **The Lamp in Assassin Mews (U, 1962)** Comedy with Francis Matthews
4.00 That's My Boy
4.45 FILM **The Man in the Mirror (U, 1936)** Fantasy with Edward Everett Horton
6.20 Strange But True
6.55 The Brothers Brian and David offer Martin a seat on the board of directors
8.00 Mark Saber A man who thinks he is dying hires a hitman
8.30 The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club Featuring the Karl Denver Trio
9.20 FILM **Sapphire (PG, 1959)** Murder mystery starring Nigel Patrick
11.05-1.40am FILM **The Odessa File (PG, 1974)** Thriller starring Jon Voight

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.35pm The Bush Years: Family, Duty, Power
7.30 Türkiye's Astonishing Antiquities Exploring Türkiye's ancient cities (4/4)
8.35 Symbols of Evil
9.45 Ancient Greece: The Dark Chronicles
10.55-12.00 Türkiye's Astonishing Antiquities

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm FILM **I Am Jackie O (12, 2020)** A profile
7.45 My Icon: Denise Lewis
8.00 The Mortician Telling the story of Los Angeles' most infamous family-run mortuary
11.10-1.30am FILM **Bowling for Columbine (15, 2002)** Michael Moore's Oscar-winning documentary

Friday 18

★ Picks of the day

Celebrity MasterChef
BBC1, 8pm

A tense finale for the three celebrity chefs

Finals week began on Tuesday with five celebs left standing: the comedian Joe Pasquale, the actress Sue Cleaver, the Paralympian Lauren Steadman, the weightlifter Emily Campbell and *Love Island*'s Shakira Khan. They undertook challenges that included cooking a two-course meal for 50 people at Crufts and the daunting chefs' table, where they had to replicate the dishes of the Ritz's executive chef, John Williams, for some of the most decorated chefs in the country. At the end of all that (catch up on iPlayer), the three finalists (no spoilers here) now face the final test: cooking a faultless three courses for the judges, Grace Dent and Giorgio Locatelli, *above*. Who will lift the coveted Celebrity MasterChef trophy? Joe Clay

George Clarke's Amazing Spaces: First Homes Channel 4, 8pm

Supermarkets used to talk about the "Delia effect", whereby ingredients she mentioned would sell out quickly. Prepare for the "George effect", based on the architect George Clarke's latest show, which features "tiny house" projects that might be within reach for ordinary first-time buyers. Sean, a 17-year-old metalwork apprentice, does have the advantage of land on his parents' farm but having taken receipt of an old refrigeration truck (£500 to buy, £200 delivery) he has set about transforming it into a home fit for a young single man, with salvaged kitchen, bathroom and bedroom and powered by solar panels on the roof. "The goal of this house is not to have to live with my parents any more," he says. Clarke also meets a woman having a tiny eco-home built in Wales. **Helen Stewart**

Architect George Clarke explores tiny homes in his latest series

Coastal Unit More4, 9pm

Part of *Walter Presents,* this French crime drama plays with a well-loved trope of cop shows: the grizzled veteran versus the rookie idealist. Iris (Lucia Passaniti) is a young detective assigned to a precinct in a southern resort. However, her new partner, Victor (Bruno Salomone), is on the verge of retirement and has no time for bright-eyed rules and regulations. The first case to demand they play nicely involves a dead chef in a ravine. Secrets follow. **Victoria Segal**

Best of Radio 2 in the Park 2026 BBC4, 9.10pm

This highlights package wraps up the annual Radio 2 in the Park weekend, which this year made its Scottish debut at City Park in Stirling. Simple Minds and Chaka Khan are headliners on an odd kind of bill that sees nothing amiss in putting ABC and Cast alongside Lulu. Elsewhere, James Blunt, Level 42, Texas, Emeli Sandé, Jack Savoretti, the Script and Deacon Blue will be showing off their festival sets. **HS**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Morning Live Magazine
10.45 Rip Off Britain: Holidays
11.30 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Sister Boniface Mysteries The head of a fragrance dynasty is found slain in his study
2.45 Escape to the Country A couple plan to start a cookery school in Shropshire (r)
3.45 Garden Rescue Charlie Dimmock revisits three of her favourite projects (r)
4.30 Antiques Road Trip Natasha Raskin Sharp and David Harper head to Yorkshire
5.15 Pointless Quiz show
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

Sister Boniface Mysteries (2pm)

7.00 The One Show With Alex Jones and JB Gill
7.30 The Travelling Auctioneers A Colchester sci-fi collector sells his treasured items (r)
8.00 Celebrity MasterChef Final ★ The finalists cook and present three courses for judges Grace Dent and Giorgio Locatelli, leading to the crowning of the champion. **See Pick of the Day** (15/15)
9.00 Would I Lie to You? With guests Sara Davies and Chris Ramsey (9/9) (r)
9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys Agnes turns to the internet to find a date for Valentine's Day (4/7) (r)
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.40 RuPaul's Drag Race UK The queens fight it out to prove they have the best celebrity dating and improv skills on Snatch Me Out (3/10) (r)
11.55 The Celebrity Inner Circle Amanda Holden hosts the quiz show with Ade Adepitan, Janette Manrara, Des Clarke, Catherine Tyldesley and Lisa Riley (1/8) (r)
12.40 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.45 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Garden Rescue (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Mastermind Double bill (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
12.30 pm Political Thinking with Nick Robinson
1.00 Impossible Quiz (r)
1.45 The Edge Game show (r)
2.30 Unbeatable (r)
3.00 Great British Railway Journeys Herne Bay (r)
3.30 Eva Longoria: Searching for Mexico Mexico City (r)
4.15 Wild China (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Cumbria (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games Larry Dean, Kirsty Gallacher, Sam Quek and Lemn Sissay take part (r)
6.30 Clive Myrie's Caribbean Adventure The world's oldest rum distillery (r)

Presenter Frances Tophill (8pm)

7.00 Newsnight Headline analysis with Matt Chorley
7.30 Beechgrove Garden Trees that can cope with wet conditions
8.00 Gardeners' World Frances Tophill heads to Exmouth in Devon, where thriving plots and passionate growers are at the heart of a vibrant community
9.00 Michael Portillo's 200 Years of the Railways The broadcaster goes on a landmark journey through 200 years of train travel, marking the moment Britain's modern railway was born (1/2) (r)
10.00 The Devil's Confession: The Lost Eichmann Tapes Israeli prosecutor Gideon Hausner's mission to tracks down secret recordings made by Adolf Eichmann in the 1950s (1/2) (r)
11.00 FILM Starve Acre (15, 2023) A couple's family life is thrown into turmoil when their son starts acting out of character. Horror thriller starring Matt Smith and Morfydd Clark
12.35 am Sign Zone: Epstein: Money, Power, and Abuse Investigation into Jeffrey Epstein's sex trafficking operation (r) (SL)
1.35 The Big Deal with Steph McGovern (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
9.30 Lorraine Entertainment news
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
12.30 pm Loose Women
1.30 ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal The team is in Milton Keynes, where Tracy Thackray-Howitt buys a gold cigarette case and a ceramic egg attracts David Ford's attention (r)
3.00 Lingo Looking for the winning words today are a married couple, a mother and daughter and a pair of Manchester flatmates (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz show (r)
5.00 The Chase Bradley Walsh presents as four more contestants take part
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

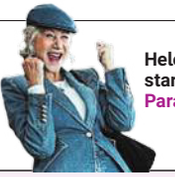
A visit to Emmerdale (8pm)

7.30 It'll Be Alright on the Night An accidental innuendo on Lorraine (r)
8.00 Emmerdale Sadie drops a bombshell and has a hostile run-in with Kim
8.30 Coronation Street Kit tries to bury his health fears by throwing himself into work
9.00 The Rainmaker Sarah inadvertently reveals confidential information about Donny Ray's death, and Rudy must make a tough decision between his girlfriend and his client (4/10)
10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
10.45 Beat the Chasers: Celebrity Special With Russell Kane, Zoe Williams, Matt Allwright, Kaye Adams and Gyles Brandreth (5/7) (r)
11.35 The Assembly Gary Lineker faces autistic and learning-disabled interviewers (4/5) (r)
12.00 am Shop on TV
3.00 Long Lost Family Two people attempt to find their respective sisters (r) (SL)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Dickinson's Real Deal From Milton Keynes (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland **7.25** Live Sportscene — Championship: Queen's Park v Ayr United (Kick-off **7.30**) **9.30** Sacked in the Morning (r) **10.00** Still Game (r) **10.30** Two Doors Down (r) **11.00-Midnight** Situationships with Sophie and Christine (r) **BBC1 Wales 7.00-9.30pm** Live Scrum V: Wales v South Africa (Kick-off **7.15**) **10.40** Never Never Never **11.00** Drag Race UK (r) **12.15-1.00am** The Celebrity Inner Circle (r) **BBC2 Wales 7.30pm** The One Show **8.00** Celebrity MasterChef Final **9.00** Gardeners' World **10.00-11.00pm** 200 Years of the Railways (r) **BBC1 NI 7.00-8.00pm** The Big Deal (r)

The best guide to streaming
Pages 22-24



Helen Mirren stars in MobLand
Paramount+

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 American Pickers (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway A house in Liverpool with a giant hole in the living room floor (r)
2.10 Countdown
3.00 A Place in the Sun A mother and daughter look for a holiday home in Crete (r)
4.00 Help! We Bought a Village In Italy ancient olive trees are hit by a disease
5.00 Four in a Bed Payment day
5.30 Come Dine with Me (r)
6.00 A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? In France, gîte owners and caterers search out the ultimate foodies for their experience weekends

Gogglebox's Sophie and Pete (9pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces: First Homes New series. The architect meets people who are beating the housing crisis by re-imagining unconventional spaces. **See Pick of the Day** (1/4)

9.00 Gogglebox The armchair critics share their opinions on what they have been watching during the week, with cameras capturing their instant reactions

10.00 Live from the Lycett Arms Joe Lycett presents comedy, celebrity chat and chaos from his own pub, with a guest manager on hand to keep things ticking over and a star-studded gang of punters

11.05 That's the Way, A-Ha, A-Ha, Joe Lycett A performance from the comedian's award-winning live show, recorded at the Duchess Theatre in London's West End (r)

12.10 am Bill Bailey's Remarkable Guide to the Orchestra (r)
1.20 FILM Moonage Daydream (12, 2022) An immersive journey through David Bowie's life
3.40 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
3.55 Come Dine with Me (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM My Mother Stole My Life (12, TVM, 2024) A mother witnesses the cover up of a murder, prompting her to steal her estranged daughter's identity and go on the run. Thriller with Patrice Goodman
4.00 Castle Castle and Beckett set out on a quest to find a stolen antique (r)
4.55 Love Nature (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Amazing Railway Journeys with Nick Knowles Nick tours Morocco, taking in Casablanca, Marrakesh and the Atlas Mountains (r)
6.55 5 News Update

Our Great Yorkshire Life (8pm)

7.00 Angela Rippon's River Cruises Angela showcases the world's most famous rivers, beginning with an adventure along the Danube (1/4) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Our Great Yorkshire Life Reuben Owen tackles hovercraft racing at Allerton Park, while chef Matt Healy meets Syrian refugee and cheesemaker Razan Alsous

9.00 All Creatures Great & Small: Behind the Magic All Creatures fan Graeme Hall journeys up to the Yorkshire Dales to learn the secrets behind the making of the television series (r)

10.00 Piers Morgan: Uncensored Opinion-led news and debate show, blending journalism and cultural commentary

12.05 am I Like a Good Spanking!
1.00 Cruise TV (r) **2.00 New Lives in the Wild** (r) **2.50 Castle** (r)
3.35 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
4.25 HMP Long Lartin: Evil Behind Bars (r) **5.35 Entertainment News 5.50 Mixmups** (r) (SL)

BBC1 Scotland 7.30-8.00pm Landward (r) **ITV1 Wales 7.00pm** Coast & Country **7.30-8.00pm** Wales This Week **STV 7.00-7.30pm** The STV Radio Football Takeover **12.00-3.00** Shop **3.50-5.05am** Unwind**UTV 7.00pm** UTV Life **7.30-8.00pm** Hidden NI

S4C 6.00pm Bwrdd i Dri (r) **6.30-6.59** Garddio a Mwy (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Cyfres Triathlon Cymru 2026: Y Bala. The final leg of the Welsh Triathlon Series **8.55** News **9.00** Am Dro! (r) **10.00** Y Deis (r) **10.30-11.35** Miwsig Fy Mywyd (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm TOTP: 2000
7.30 TOTP: 2000 Jayne Middlemiss presents the pop chart programme
8.00 TOTP: 1981 Music by Godley and Creme, the Pointer Sisters, Bucks Fizz and Adam and the Ants
8.40 TOTP: 1985 Simon Bates and Peter Powell present the pop chart programme
9.10 Best of Radio 2 in the Park 2026 Highlights from a weekend of Radio 2 in the Park in Stirling. **See Pick of the Day**
10.10 The Rolling Stones: Live at the Fonda Theatre A 2015 concert in which the band played their Sticky Fingers album
11.35-12.35am Mick Jagger: My Life as a Rolling Stone Documentary telling the story of the band (1/4)

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm The Royal
2.40 Wild at Heart
3.40 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat
6.55 Heartbeat
8.00 Doc Martin The surgery is chaotic, with Martin and Louisa both now practising from it (S10, ep2)
9.00 Doc Martin Morwenna is back as receptionist and the Ellinghams have a new dog (S10, ep3)
10.00 Downton Abbey The wounded officers arrive at Downton, while Violet and Rosamund discover Lavinia's past misdeeds (S2, ep3)
11.10 Scott & Bailey The body count rises
12.00-1.00am Scott & Bailey The detective duo investigate the death of a care home resident

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 I Am Darren
7.20 FILM Back to the Future Part II (PG, 1989)
9.00 Death in Paradise
10.00 Cunk on Earth
10.30 Cunk on Earth
11.00 Cunk on Earth
11.30 Ideal
12.00-12.30am Ideal

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

8.30am-6.00pm Live DP World Tour Golf The BMW PGA Championship
6.30 Live WSL: Manchester City v Liverpool (Kick-off **7.00**) From Joie Stadium
8.00 Live FNF: Brentford v Chelsea (Kick-off **8.00**)
10.45 Paper Talk
11.00-12.00m't News

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 Painting Birds with Jim and Nancy Moir
4.00 Discovering: Robin Williams
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2025
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A woman is found to have a stolen mink coat
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A man is suspected of murder
8.00 Guy Garvey: From the Vaults With the Smiths, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Depeche Mode and the Cure
9.00 Kate Bush: The Timeless Genius A look at the music and legacy of the singer-songwriter
10.15-12.25am Björk: Cornucopia

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.45 pm American Pickers Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz take their nephew on his first pick
2.45 American Pickers Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz visit a theme park during a clear-out
3.45 The Sweeney Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise guest star
4.55 The Professionals Bodie and Doyle are held hostage in a farmhouse
6.00 Live Darts: World Series Finals Gabby Partington presents coverage of night two from AFAS Live in Amsterdam, featuring the concluding first-round matches, played over the best of 11 legs
10.00-12.05am All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite Hard-hitting action from the world of All Elite Wrestling

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm Wheel of Fortune
8.00 The 1% Club
9.00 Big Brother: Live Eviction AJ Odudu and Will Best announce the first housemate to face eviction
10.35 Family Guy
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am American Dad! Animated comedy

TNT Sports 1

SKY 410, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

8.30am Live AFLW
10.30-1.30pm Live AFL
7.00pm La Vuelta Men
8.00 Supercars Championship Highlights
9.00 MotoGP
9.30 Fishing: On the Bank
10.30 MLB Plays of the Week
11.00 MLB Highlights
12.00-3.00am Live MLB

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me In Medway, Kent
2.15 Four in a Bed
4.50 Car S.O.S
5.50 Car S.O.S Tim and Fuzz pick up their very first supercar
6.50 Grand Designs A man aims to build one of the largest homes featured on the show
7.55 Grand Designs A manor house restoration project in central France
9.00 Coastal Unit New French crime drama. New police detective Iris joins a lively precinct, and investigates the death of a chef. **See Pick of the Day**
10.15 24 Hours in A&E A man is brought to resus with a head injury after having an epileptic seizure
11.20-12.20am 24 Hours in A&E A 14-year-old boy is rushed in after falling from a swing

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.40 pm Classic EastEnders
2.20 Classic Neighbours
3.20 Sister Boniface Mysteries (S2, ep3)
4.20 Father Brown
5.20 As Time Goes By
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine Triple bill
8.00 You're Killing Me A live interview with a sensationalist podcaster turns shocking (5/6)
9.00 Father Brown Lady Felicia and Mrs McCarthy are taken hostage (S7, ep1)
10.00 New Tricks The team reinvestigates the 1956 disappearance of a police officer (S11, ep4)
11.00 Copper Five Points falls into a state of panic as a community safe haven is seized by one of the deadliest men in New York (S2, ep5)
12.00-1.00am Lovejoy Love is in the air for Eric

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm Planet Earth II
8.00 Canal Boat Diaries Robbie Cumming journeys from Yardley Wood to Netherton Tunnel
9.00 Canal Boat Diaries
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash An MG Midget

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.45pm The Gilded Age Period drama (S1, ep9)
7.55 The Gilded Age Carrie Coon stars (S2, ep1)
9.00 The Iris Affair Iris makes a stand (7/8)
10.00-12.40am FILM Mulholland Drive (15, 2001) David Lynch's mystery starring Naomi Watts

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.10 pm Siege at Red River (U, 1954) Western starring Van Johnson
2.55 Dancing at Lughnasa (PG, 1998) Period drama starring Michael Gambon and Meryl Streep
4.50 The Mark of Zorro (U, 1940) Swashbuckling adventure starring Tyrone Power
6.40 Anzio (PG, 1968) Second World War drama starring Robert Mitchum
9.00 Top Gun: Maverick (12, 2022) Pete "Maverick" Mitchell gets called back to the Top Gun academy, where he must train a new band of recruits for a deadly mission. Action drama starring Tom Cruise
11.35-1.45am Escape from Pretoria (12, 2020) Drama starring Daniel Radcliffe

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.05 pm The Edgar Wallace Mystery Theatre A surgeon plots to kill his wife's lover
2.15 The Adventures of Robin Hood
2.45 FILM A Woman's Temptation (U, 1959) Crime drama starring Patricia Driscoll
4.00 That's My Boy
4.30 The Cheaters
5.00 A Family at War Margaret is taken to hospital
6.00 Rooms
7.00 Z Cars The team investigates a break-in at a jewellery shop
8.00 Public Eye Frank must discover how a woman came by an inheritance
9.05 FILM Haunted (15, 1995) Period supernatural thriller starring Aidan Quinn and Kate Beckinsale
11.25-12.55am Count Dracula

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.35pm The Bush Years: Family, Duty, Power
7.30 The Great Wall of China: The Hidden Story
8.35 Lost Cities of Rome
9.35 Ancient Greece: The Dark Chronicles The rise of Alexander the Great
10.50-1.10am The Great Wall of China: The Hidden Story

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm Chernobyl: The Lost Tapes Archive footage
8.00 The Salisbury Poisonings: A Spy Next Door
9.40 The Truth vs Alex Jones The defamation lawsuits brought by Sandy Hook parents against Alex Jones
11.50-1.50am The Two Escobars Documentary

Radio

Your seven-day listening guide and critics' choice

Saturday 12 September

TIMES RADIO

6.00am Rosie Wright and Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00** Ed Vaizey **1.00pm** Jane Mulkerrins. With Priya Parker, Ruby Bhogal and Patrick Brammall **4.00** Ayesha Hazarika with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Highlights from Times Radio **10.00** Darryl Morris **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2

6.00am Sounds of the 60s **8.00** Dermot O'Leary **10.00** Radio 2 in the Park **1.00pm** Radio 2 in the Park. Performances **2.00am** Tony Blackburn's Sounds of Soul

RADIO 3

6.30am Breakfast
9.00 Saturday Morning
12.00 Earlier... with Jools Holland. With Will Palin (r)
1.00pm Key Changes: Radio 3's Essential History of Classical Music. A look at how opera became the dominant force in popular musical culture
2.00 Record Review
4.00 Sound of Cinema
5.00 This Classical Life. With the countertenor Iestyn Davies
6.00 Music Planet. Including music by L'Alba and Dàna
7.10 Live Last Night of the Proms 2026. The concluding concert of the season, from the Royal Albert Hall, as tenor Nicky Spence and pianist Yuja Wang join the BBC Singers and BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus
11.00 New Music Show
12.30am Through the Night

Key Changes
Radio 3, 1pm

The station's *Essential History of Classical Music* series looks at how Gioachino Rossini, *above*, became opera's biggest star, focusing on his visit to Vienna in 1822, where he was treated like royalty. His works were packing them in at the opera houses and so popular they were sung on the streets. He even had a steak dish — Tournedos Rossini — named in his honour.

RADIO 4

5.30am News Summary
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 When Banksy Comes to Town. Investigation (r)
6.00 News and Papers
6.07 Open Country (r)
6.30 Farming Today This Week
7.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 Saturday Live. Adrian Chiles presents the weekend entertainment show
10.00 You're Dead to Me. Beliefs in witches, fairies and ghosts in early modern Scotland
10.30 Soul Music. Reflection on *Morning* by Edvard Grieg (5/5)
11.00 The Week in Westminster
11.30 From Our Own Correspondent
12.04pm Money Box
12.30 The News Quiz (r)
1.00 News
1.10 Any Questions? (r)
2.05 Any Answers?
2.45 The Archers. The ground shifts for Fallon (r)
3.00 Drama: The Good Earth. By Pearl S Buck (1/2) (r)
4.00 Weekend Woman's Hour
5.00 Saturday PM. With Joe Pike
5.30 Political Thinking with Nick Robinson. New series. An interview with a political figure
5.54 Shipping Forecast
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.15 Loose Ends. Stuart Maconie is joined by guests Jay Rayner, Sindhu Vee and Helen Rebanks
7.00 Profile
7.15 This Cultural Life (r)
8.00 Archive on 4: First Contact. Horatio Clare explores the idea of first contact
9.00 The Moral Maze (r)
10.00 News
10.15 The Food Programme. Exploring poverty food at the Oxford Food Symposium
11.00 Your Mum. With guests Josh Jones and Jen Brister
11.30 Brain of Britain (r)
12.00 Midnight News
12.15am Bookclub (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Sunday 13 September

TIMES RADIO

6.00am Rosie Wright and Guto Harri with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00** Adam Boulton **1.00pm** Jane Mulkerrins. With Prof Tanya Byron and Kelly Macdonald **4.00** Ayesha Hazarika with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Highlights from Times Radio **10.00** Darryl Morris **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2

6.00am Good Morning Sunday **9.00** Love Songs with Angela Griffin **11.00** Radio 2 in the Park. Live coverage throughout the day from Stirling, featuring Deacon Blue and Simple Minds

RADIO 3

6.30am Breakfast
9.00 Sunday Morning
12.00 Private Passions. With the journalist Lyse Doucet
1.30pm Music Map. Vaughan Williams' *Dives and Lazarus*
3.00 Music Matters: Arranging the Air. Becoming a conductor
4.00 Jazz Record Requests
5.00 The Early Music Show (r)
6.00 Live Choral Evensong. Thanksgiving for the BBC Proms
7.00 Between the Ears. The history of the recorded loop
7.30 Sunday Feature: New Generation Thinkers. ASMR
7.45 Words and Music
9.00 Street to Symphony Hall. New series. Goldie traces how jungle, hip-hop and grime created new hybrid orchestral forms
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 Unclassified
12.30am Through the Night (r)

The Reunion
Radio 4, 10am

Kirsty Wark brings together the casts of two of the most acclaimed films by the Glaswegian writer and director Bill Forsyth, *Gregory's Girl* and *Local Hero*. Those from the former include Rab Buchanan and Clare Grogan, *above*, discuss the film with the producer David Puttnam, while the *Local Hero* actors Peter Riegert and Denis Lawson remember their times on set.

RADIO 4

5.30am News Summary
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Bells on Sunday
5.45 In Touch (r)
6.00 News Headlines
6.05 Heart and Soul (r)
6.35 On Your Farm
7.00 News and Papers
7.10 Sunday
7.54 Radio 4 Appeal
8.00 News and Papers
8.10 Sunday Worship
8.48 Witness History (r)
8.58 Tweet of the Day
9.00 Broadcasting House
10.00 The Reunion
11.00 The Archers (r)
12.15pm Profile (r)
12.30 Unspeakable (r)
1.00 The World This Weekend
1.30 Can Britain's Broken Energy System Be Fixed? Examining Britain's electricity prices
2.00 Gardeners' Question Time. Listeners' queries (r)
2.45 NatureBang (r)
3.00 Drama: The Things They Carried. Dramatisation of Tim O'Brien's novel (2/2)
4.00 Take Four Books
4.30 Brain of Britain
5.00 Witness History (r)
5.10 All Kinds of Minds (3/3) (r)
5.54 Shipping Forecast
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.15 Pick of the Week
7.00 The Archers. Harrison has a confession to make
7.15 The Ocean within Us (r)
7.45 Thief at the British Museum. Documentary (r)
8.00 Word of Mouth (r)
8.30 Last Word (r)
9.00 Money Box (r)
9.26 Radio 4 Appeal (r)
9.30 From Our Own Correspondent (r)
10.00 The Westminster Hour
11.00 Great Lives (r)
11.30 Hoax (5/5) (r)
11.45 Short Works (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.15am Crossing Continents (r)
12.45 Bells on Sunday (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Tuesday 15 September

TIMES RADIO

5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell. With William Hague **10.00** Hugo Rifkind. With Dan Hill **1.00pm** The Times at One with Dominic O'Connell **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover. With Caitlin Moran **4.00** John Pienaar with Times Radio Drive **7.00** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2

6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Clara Amfo **4.00** Drivetime **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Jazz Show with Jamie Cullum **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live. Including highlights from summer festivals in Amsterdam, Utrecht and Edinburgh
4.00 Composer of the Week: Schubert: The Final Years. Kate Molleson focuses on when Schubert began his Symphony No 9
5.00 In Tune. Music and guests
6.45 Radio 3 in Concert. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's monumental cantata *The Song of Hiawatha*
9.45 The Essay: In Voice. The tenor Nicky Spence explores the variety of human voices
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

Life as a Muse
Radio 4, 4pm

The historian Ruth Millington looks at the lives of those who have inspired artists. She speaks to the designer Celia Birtwell, *above*, who loved being a lifelong inspiration of David Hockney, and also to Lydia Corbett, one of Picasso's last surviving muses, who was painted by him when she was a teenager. Unlike many of Picasso's muses, Corbett felt empowered by the experience.

RADIO 4

5.00am News Summary
5.04 Yesterday in Parliament
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 The Life Scientific. Jim Al-Khalili is joined by the epigeneticist Edith Heard
9.30 All in the Mind
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 Add to Playlist (r)
11.45 Book of the Week: Redwood (2/5)
12.04pm Call You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Hitler Diaries Scandal. Andrew Hunter Murray examines the 1983 hoax
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: The School Run. By Simon Scardifield
3.00 History's Secret Heroes. A family of Jewish performers who survived Auschwitz
3.30 BBC National Short Story Award 2026. Readings
4.00 Life as a Muse. Ruth Millington celebrates the people who have inspired great art
4.30 What's Up Docs? Diabetes
5.00 PM. Evan Davis presents
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Paul Sinha's Perfect Pub Quiz. Paul poses questions about archbishops (6/6)
7.00 The Archers. Lynda finds herself intrigued
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 File on 4 Investigates. New series. Issues of major concern
8.40 In Touch
9.00 Crossing Continents. How Turkey's courts are being used to reduce political dissent
9.30 Scam Secrets (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Exhibition. By Alex Hyde (2/10)
11.00 Half-Life (r)
11.30 Today in Parliament
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: Redwood (2/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Wednesday 16 September

TIMES RADIO

5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell **10.00** Hugo Rifkind. With Penn Jillette and Piff the Magic Dragon **1.00pm** The Times at One with Dominic O'Connell **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover. With William Boyd **4.00** John Pienaar with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2

6.30am The Radio 2 Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Trevor Nelson **4.00** Drivetime **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Folk Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live. Featuring the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra in Bach's Concerto in D minor, from Amsterdam
3.00 Live Choral Evensong. Marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Arthur Wills
4.00 Composer of the Week: Schubert: The Final Years
5.00 In Tune. Music and guests
7.00 Classical Mixtape
7.30 Radio 3 in Concert. Pianist Steven Osborne pays tribute to the pianist Alfred Brendel
9.45 The Essay. The ways singers can adapt the human voice
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

Knock Knock
Radio 4 Extra, 10am

Thomas de Quincey published *On the Knocking on the Gate in Macbeth* in 1823, the first time the power of sound effects was studied. In this programme, subtitled *200 Years of Sound Effects*, the composer Sarah Angliss, *above*, meets sound editors to discuss their work. They include Ben Burtt, who created the sounds of the *Star Wars* universe (including Darth Vader's breathing).

RADIO 4

5.00am News Summary
5.04 Yesterday in Parliament
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 More or Less
9.30 Where Is Austin Tice? Josh Baker reveals how the search for Austin began
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 File on 4 Investigates
11.40 This Week in History. The discovery of Ötzi the iceman
11.45 Book of the Week: Redwood (3/5)
12.04pm You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Hitler Diaries Scandal. Andrew Hunter Murray examines the 1983 hoax
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Broken Colours. By Matthew Broughton (r)
3.00 Money Box
3.30 BBC National Short Story Award 2026. Readings of shortlisted entries for the award
4.00 When It Hits the Fan
4.15 The Media Show
5.00 PM. Evan Davis presents
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Jessica Fostekew: Sturdy Girl Club. Exploring women's rugby union (2/4) (r)
7.00 The Archers. Fallon is shocked by a controversial move
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 The Moral Maze. Debate
9.00 The Life Scientific (r)
9.30 All in the Mind (r)
10.00 The World Tonight. With James Coomarasamy
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Exhibition. By Alex Hyde (3/10)
11.00 Nora Meadows' Week of Wellness (5/6) (r)
11.15 The Skewer. Topical comedy show from Jon Holmes
11.30 NatureBang (r)
11.45 Today in Parliament
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: Redwood (3/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

The BBC's chief international correspondent Lyse Doucet, pictured in Kyiv, Ukraine, in 2022

Pick of the Week

Private Passions
Sunday, Radio 3, noon

The passions of a war correspondent

In an exceptional episode, Lyse Doucet, the BBC's chief international correspondent, shares some of her favourite music and discusses life away from the war zones she is famed for reporting from. She recalls growing up in a small coastal town in Canada and dreaming of becoming a journalist, a career she began with the BBC in the Ivory Coast, leading to her strong relationship with the Middle East and Afghanistan. Her music choices include Bach, Sibelius and pieces performed by musicians from Afghanistan and Africa. **Clair Woodward**

TIMES RADIO
Our free radio station has all the latest headlines, interviews and debates every morning
Listen seven days a week
DAB ● APP ● WEBSITE ● SMART SPEAKER

Monday 14 September

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell. With Andrew Neil **10.00** Hugo Rifkind. With Daniel Lieberman **1.00pm** Dominic O'Connell **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover **4.00** John Pienaar with Times Radio Drive **7.00** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am Sara Cox **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Trevor Nelson **4.00** Drivetime **7.00** Radio 2 in the Park: Highlights **9.00** The Blues Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live. With a live recital by mezzo Alice Coote and pianist Sergey Rybin
4.00 Composer of the Week: Schubert: The Final Years. Kate Molleson examines the last five years of Franz Schubert's life
5.00 In Tune. Music and guests
7.00 Classical Mixtape
7.30 Radio 3 in Concert. Donald Runnicles conducts the Edinburgh Festival Chorus, BBC SSO and soloists in Schubert's Unfinished Symphony and Mahler's *Das klagende Lied*
9.45 The Essay: In Voice. The tenor Nick Spence explores the human voice
10.00 Night Tracks (r)
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

Redwood by Ben Macintyre
Radio 4, 11.45am

The new book by Ben Macintyre, *above*, is set in 1980s Tehran and tells a remarkable story of Cold War espionage against the backdrop of the Iranian Revolution. Read by Jamie Parker, the first episode of the five-part adaptation begins in 1981 after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has swept to power and the Soviets are preparing to overthrow his fledgling Islamist regime.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary
5.04 Yesterday in Parliament
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 Start the Week
9.45 Café Hope
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 The Value Crisis. New series. How technology is changing what people value
11.45 Book of the Week: Redwood. By Ben Macintyre. A story of Cold War espionage (1/5)
12.04pm You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Hitler Diaries Scandal. New series. Andrew Hunter Murray examines the 1983 hoax
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Fags, Mags and Bags (r)
2.45 Faith, Hope and Glory. Drama exploring post-war Britain (1/8) (r)
3.00 Great Lives. Dr Tony Juniper picks EO Wilson
3.30 BBC National Short Story Award 2026. New series. Readings of shortlisted entries
4.00 Can Britain's Broken Energy System Be Fixed? (r)
4.30 Soul Music (5/5) (r)
5.00 PM. Evan Davis presents
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Unspeakable. With guests Marcus Brigstocke, Bella Hull and Pierre Novellie
7.00 The Archers. Carol makes her feelings clear
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 Rethink (r)
8.30 BBC Inside Science (r)
9.00 Start the Week (r)
9.45 Café Hope (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Exhibition. By Alex Hyde (1/10)
11.00 There's Something I Need to Tell You (4/5) (r)
11.30 Today in Parliament
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: Redwood (1/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Thursday 17 September

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell. With Michael Gove **10.00** Hugo Rifkind. With Chris Olsen **1.00pm** The Times at One with Dominic O'Connell **2.00** Aasmah Mir **4.00** John Pienaar with Times Radio Drive **7.00** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Radio 2 Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Clara Amfo **4.00** Drivetime **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Country Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live. Summer festivals in Amsterdam, Utrecht and Edinburgh
4.00 Composer of the Week: Schubert: The Final Years. The composer's penultimate year
5.00 In Tune. Music and guests
7.00 Classical Mixtape
7.30 Radio 3 in Concert. The opening concert of the 2026 Edinburgh International Festival from the Usher Hall, Wynton Marsalis's *All Rise*, a jazz symphony in 12 movements
9.45 The Essay: In Voice. The tenor Nicky Spence confronts the fragility of the voice
10.00 Night Tracks (r)
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

South of the River
Radio 4, 2.15pm

Shaun Williamson, *above*, plays Barry Monk, a London cab driver who picks up two drunken Russian sailors, goes back to their house for a game of cards, discovers a submarine in the Thames and takes a ride on it and is dropped off in Whitby. As you do. The daft comedy sees Monk being used as a double agent, working between an MI5 boss and Lorraine Kelly, played by Debra Stephenson.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary
5.04 More or Less (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 In Our Time. New series. Misha Glenny hosts a discussion on Utopia by Sir Thomas More
9.45 Strong Message Here. New series. Political language
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 This Cultural Life
11.45 Book of the Week: Redwood (4/5)
12.04pm Scam Secrets (8/8)
12.32 Dough. The businesses behind everyday products
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Hitler Diaries Scandal
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: South of the River. By Stephen Keyworth
3.00 Open Country. Kate Stables explores Winchester
3.27 Radio 4 Appeal (r)
3.30 BBC National Short Story Award 2026. Readings of shortlisted entries for the award
4.00 Rethink. Ben Ansell finds out what lessons the UK can learn from recent wars
4.30 BBC Inside Science
5.00 PM. Evan Davis presents
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Omid Djalili: Namaste. The comedian explores Iran, conflict and identity
7.00 The Archers. It is action stations for Lynda
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 When It Hits the Fan (r)
8.15 The Media Show (r)
9.00 Loose Ends (r)
9.45 Strong Message Here (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Exhibition. By Alex Hyde (4/10)
11.00 Radical
11.30 NatureBang (r)
11.45 Today in Parliament
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: Redwood (4/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Friday 18 September

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Rosie Wright and Calum Macdonald **10.00** Ed Vaizey **1.00pm** Ayesha Hazarika **4.00** Cathy Newman with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Geoff Norcott. With guest Clint Boon **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Trevor Nelson **4.00** Drivetime **7.00** Michelle Visage **9.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Kitchen Disco **11.00** The Rock Show

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live. Summer festivals in Amsterdam, Utrecht and Edinburgh
4.00 Composer of the Week: Schubert: The Final Years. Kate Molleson focuses on Schubert's final year when he composed some of his most iconic chamber music
5.00 In Tune. Music and guests
7.00 Classical Mixtape
7.30 Friday Night Is Music Night. Owain Park conducts the BBC CO at The Anvil, Basingstoke, with saxophonist Amy Dickson
9.45 The Essay: In Voice. The tenor Nicky Spence celebrates great voices
10.00 Late Junction
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night (r)

Drama: Underground
Radio 4, 2.15pm

Chloë Myerson's five-part drama is set in a world in the near future that is on the brink of collapse. With the super-wealthy having already decamped to luxury underground bunkers, Charly (Ava Hinds-Jones, *above*) takes a job tutoring the children of reclusive billionaire Edward (Jacob Fortune-Lloyd). However, after hearing mysterious messages, she becomes suspicious of her new role.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary
5.04 Rethink (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 The Reunion. Casts from *Gregory's Girl* and *Local Hero* (r)
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 The Food Programme
11.45 Book of the Week: Redwood (5/5)
12.04pm Rare Earth. Examining how the legal system can protect the environment
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Hitler Diaries Scandal
2.00 The Archers. It is action stations for Lynda (r)
2.15 Drama: Underground. New series. By Chloë Myerson (1/5)
2.45 When Banksy Comes to Town. Sam and Julian act to protect the art work (2/5) (r)
3.00 Gardeners' Question Time
3.30 BBC National Short Story Award 2026. Readings of shortlisted entries for the award
4.00 Last Word. Obituaries
4.30 More or Less (r)
5.00 PM. Anita Anand presents
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 The News Quiz. Ashley Storrie, Cody Dahler, Catherine Bohart and Stephen Bush play the topical comedy panel game
7.00 The Archers. There is a race against time for Anna
7.15 Add to Playlist (6/6)
8.00 Any Questions? Topical discussion from St Austell
8.55 This Week in History (r)
9.00 Archive on 4: Teen Spirit — Nevermind at 30. Leading figures reflect on the impact of Nirvana's *Nevermind* album
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Exhibition. By Alex Hyde (5/10)
11.00 Americast
11.30 Soul Music (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: Redwood (5/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

MindGames

Samurai Sudoku No 1045 Medium

2	1	8		4			5	
		5	1				2	
9	7			5			1	
	5	9		3				
3				1			4	
				7		5	3	
5				9				
1					6			
7			8			2		

7			1			5		
	8			5			6	9
4	5	6		8		7		
		2	3			1		
	1		4		8		9	
		8			1	2		
				6	1	3	7	8
				4			2	
		1	4		9	7		3
			9			2		
5		4	2		3	6		

7			2				3	
	2			1		7		
3	9	4		5				
	7	2	9	1	5	5	4	
		3			8	2		
		5		8		3	2	7
2	4			7			5	
9					2			4

			2	1		6		
			8			2		3
						6	4	
8	2	1		6				
				2	9	8		
				1		6	5	2
			6			9		7
			2			1	6	
			7			4	9	5

Content © Puzzler Media Ltd 2025, all rights reserved

Our five-grid Sudoku will test your powers of logic and elimination — against the clock. Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length but the interlocking boxes give you more clues — and more complexity! Remember — don't try to solve each Sudoku grid in turn, the puzzle has to be tackled as a whole.

Solution to last week's Samurai Sudoku No 1044

5	6	4	9	2	8	3	1	7
7	8	2	3	1	5	4	6	9
3	1	9	4	6	7	8	2	5
2	3	5	8	4	6	7	9	1
8	4	1	7	9	2	5	3	6
6	9	7	1	5	3	2	8	4
1	2	8	5	7	9	6	4	3
9	5	3	6	8	4	1	7	2
4	7	6	2	3	1	9	5	8

						8	1	7
						9	6	5
						4	2	3
8	1	7	2	6	3	1	5	8
9	6	5	4	2	9	8	6	4
4	2	3	1	7	8	9	3	2
2	9	5	7	3	1	5	8	9
4	3	8	2	9	6	4	7	
1	7	6	8	5	4	3	2	1

8	4	9	6	7	1	5	3	2
7	1	2	4	5	3	8	9	6
6	5	3	2	8	9	7	1	4
5	6	1	9	2	4	3	8	7
9	2	4	8	3	7	1	6	5
3	8	7	5	1	6	4	2	9
2	9	5	1	4	8	6	7	3
4	7	6	3	9	5	2	4	8
1	3	8	7	6	2	9	5	1

2	7	6	5	9	3	8	1	4
5	9	3	1	8	4	2	6	7
1	4	8	6	7	2	3	9	5
3	8	5	4	1	6	9	7	2
4	6	2	7	3	9	5	8	1
9	1	7	8	2	5	6	4	3
6	5	1	3	4	8	7	2	9
7	3	9	2	6	1	4	5	8
8	2	4	9	5	7	1	3	6

3	7	4	8	1	6	9	5	2
6	9	2	5	3	7	4	1	8
1	5	8	9	4	2	6	3	7
4	8	1	3	9	5	7	2	6
7	6	3	2	8	4	1	9	5
2	5	9	1	7	6	8	4	3
5	3	6	4	2	8	9	7	1
8	4	7	6	5	9	3	8	4
9	1	5	7	6	3	2	8	9

Stuck on Samurai, KenKen, Killer or Sudoku? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Word Watch

By David Parfitt

Cria
a. A baby llama
b. A coastal inlet
c. A papal court

Arenaceous
a. Expansive
b. Sandy
c. Made of mother-of-pearl

Torve
a. An ice-skating turn
b. Grim in appearance
c. A hoard of treasure

Bonheur-du-jour
a. A daisy
b. A small desk
c. A dandy or fop

Solution on page 46

Polygon

By Roger Phillips

Using the given letters no more than once, make as many words as possible of four or more letters, always including the central letter. Capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives are disallowed.

How you rate: 15 words average; 20, good; 28, very good; 36, excellent.

Friday's solution on page 46. Today's solution in MindGames on Monday

Codeword No 5944

■	2	4	1	14	6	25	■	3	2	10	8	■	
3	■	7	■	6	■	6	■	20	■	11	■	6	
1 P	2	13	13	7	■	5	11	18	3	2 I	24	5	
2	■	18	■	25	■	4	■	7	■	4	■	1	
25	14	6	1	5	9	14	■	11	7	23	5	11	
5	■	8	■	■	■	6	■	11	■	■	■	26	
■	26	7	10	16	25	■	21	26	4	1	16	■	
23	■	■	■	14	■	18	■	■	■	6	■	17	
7	18	19	18	6	■	21	18	10	11	5	7	6	
21	■	5	■	2	■	15	■	16	■	24	■	14	
12	7	10	18	13	13	2	■	5	22	2	3	25	
14	■	8	■	14	■	21	■	3	■	5	■	16	
■	21	14	14	21	■	9	2	3	14	15	21	■	

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

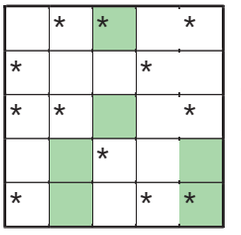
1 P	2 I	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid. Proper nouns are excluded.

Stuck on Codeword? To receive four clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Square Routes® No 393 Medium

By Ian Simpson & Richard Heald



AUTOMATA
HAYMOW
MOTIVITY
OUTWIT
TAXIWAY
WHAMMY
WITHOUT

Put one letter in each cell so that each word on the right can be spelt out by moving from cell to cell without using diagonal moves. You can use a cell more than once in a word (including backtracking into a cell you've just used), but double letters (eg, the LL in ALL) must use two adjacent cells. The words start in the coloured cells and the vowels are shown by asterisks.

Cell Blocks

No 5827

4				3	4
			2		
5	10			3	
			4	4	4
				2	
					4

Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Solution to Square Routes, Codeword and Cell Blocks in MindGames on Monday. Yesterday's solutions on page 45

Sudoku No 17,102 Fiendish

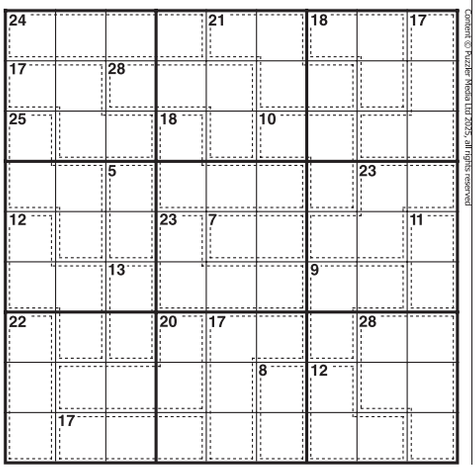
Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9

Solutions to Sudoku, Killer & KenKen in MindGames on Monday

						5		
	7					4	8	6
						6		1 2
4	8			9		1	3	
7		2			5			
	3							
	9			6				
		7	2		1		4	
5				8	7			

Killer No 10,927 Deadly

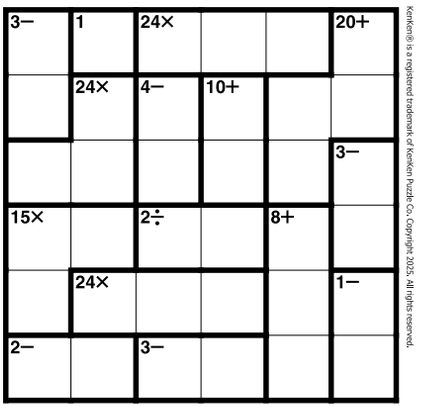
Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.



Content © Puzzler Media Ltd 2025, all rights reserved

KenKen No 6936 Medium

All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.



KenKen® is a registered trademark of Nextoni Puzzle Co. Copyright 2025. All rights reserved.

Cryptic Quintagram®

Solve all five cryptic clues using each letter underneath once only

1 To an extent, Bellingham used to entertain (5)

_ _ _ _ _

2 Rice, say, no longer good around pressure (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Serious line for Stones (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Burn spun me in box (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Helpless Konsa battling with ref (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

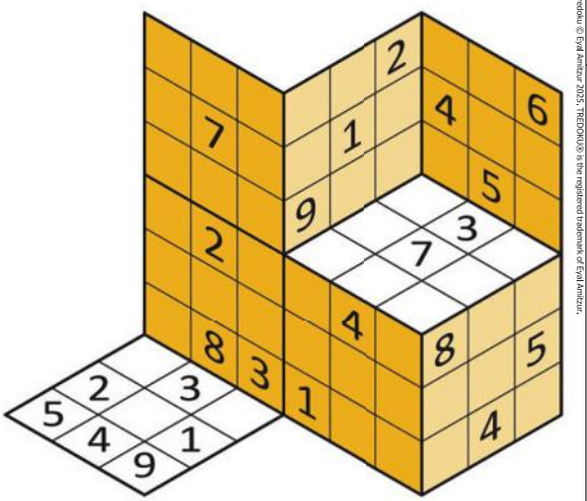
A	A	A	A	A	C	E	E
E	E	E	E	F	G	K	L
L	M	M	N	O	P	R	R
R	S	S	S	T	T	U	V

Solution on page 46

Tredoku No 1959 Medium

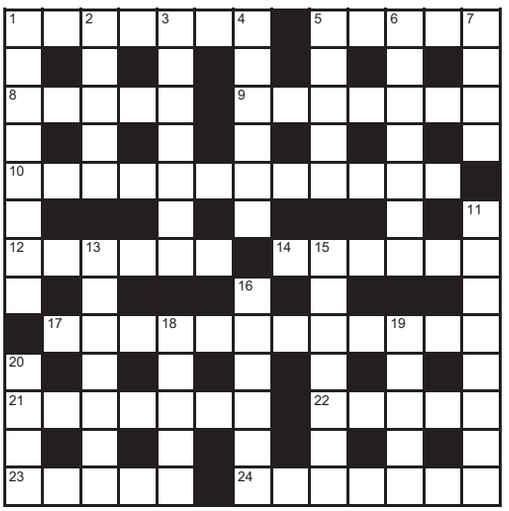
Tredoku is similar to Sudoku: the digits 1 to 9 must appear once only in each 3x3 box and in each line of nine consecutive cells. However, since the puzzle is three-dimensional, the lines may be straight or bent around angles. Follow each line's direction in search of clues.

Solution in MindGames on Monday



Tredoku © Eyal Amitzur 2025. TREDOKU® is the registered trademark of Eyal Amitzur.

times2 Crossword No 10,260



Across

1 Satisfy (hunger or thirst) (7)
5 Riot control spray (1,1,3)
8 Sacred song or hymn (5)
9 Without purpose or function (7)
10 Pertaining to one's ambitions and aims (12)
12 Former currency of Portugal (6)
14 Attack, set upon (6)
17 Harry Houdini, eg (12)
21 Pre-revolution Russian empress (*S, not Z*) (7)
22 Incidental remark (5)
23 Piece of scholarly writing (5)
24 Receptacle for cigarette remnants (7)

Down

1 Placated (8)
2 Forcefully tread (on) (5)
3 Esteemed, respected (7)
4 Correspond (to) (6)
5 Statement of belief (5)
6 Caribbean island country (7)
7 Sliding window frame (4)
11 Ingratiating praise (8)
13 Fellow leading actors in a production (2-5)
15 Tolerate, endure (7)
16 Instrumental composition (6)
18 Friendship (5)
19 More hostile or cold in manner (5)
20 Eyelid sore (4)

Solution to Crossword 10,259

	M		C		J	O	B		F		V			
Z	E	R	O		A		L	I	E	L	O	W		
	A		L		I		A		S		T			
I	N	P	U	B	L	I	C		T	R	E	K		
	T		M				K		E					
P	I	C	N	I	C			C	O	R	T	E	X	
	M				L		A				N			
G	E	M	I	N	I		P	E	S	E	T	A		
			N		N				C		I			
S	H	O	T		C	O	N	F	R	E	R	E		
	A		E		H		O		I		E			
Q	U	I	N	C	E		O		P	A	T	H		
	L		D		R	U	N		T		Y			

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Mindset By 700

1. Divide into four groups of four. (Vowels and spaces have been removed)
DNNRZNBLNKYCLYDCLRDCYTSNDPSYGNNNKY
LLNWMXCPNKYPTHYMNTNKYWNKYTH
2. Using only addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, brackets make 700 from 9898989 without reordering the digits.
3. Animal wordsearch:
D O D G D G D D O D
O G G D O D G O O D
O G D O O G D O D D
D G G D G O G D G G
D O O G O G D O O O

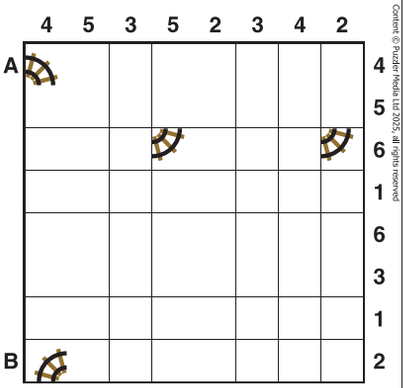
Solutions to Mindset and Scrabble on page 46

Put your solving skills to the test some more with The Times Mindset Puzzles Book 1

Train Tracks No 2969

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Solution in MindGames on Monday



Content © Puzzler Media Ltd 2025, all rights reserved

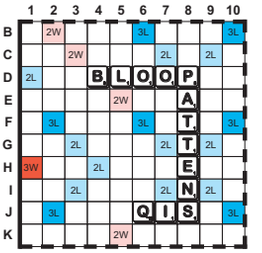
When and where was today's archive picture taken? Play Picle at thetimes.com/picle

Scrabble® By Paul Gallen

Set-up plays in Scrabble are a double-edged sword. If the strategy works, the resulting score can be considerable and may even be equivalent to playing a bonus word. Conversely, if the opponent anticipates the plan, the threat can be neutralised.

Consider the decisive final game of the 2026 British Matchplay Scrabble Championship (BMSC) between Brian Po and Lewis Mackay. Po held the following rack, facing the position shown in the board extract below.

D E G J M U Z



Po chose MOZE (C7d) for 31 points while retaining DGJU. At first sight, the leave appeared awkward, but Po had identified an appealing set-up arising from this move. MOZE would create the word ET (F7a) beside a triple-letter score square. By retaining the J, Po hoped to capitalise on that hotspot with a high-scoring play involving JET, thereby extracting maximum value from his J tile. The move also left open the possibility of bonus words involving JUDGE in row H with his remaining DGJU should favourable tiles be drawn later. There are three eight-letter words that fit the ???JUDGE pattern. One is FORJUDGE. Can you think of the other two?

However, creating a threat is only half the battle. The best set-up plays create opportunities that are difficult for the opponent to anticipate or prevent. In Po's case, the immediate JET opportunity was not disguised. Mackay could see exactly where the danger lay, and he played YAH for 31 points to neutralise the threat.

Even so, Po's choice was one of the best moves in this position. Unfortunately, even a well-conceived set-up can fail.

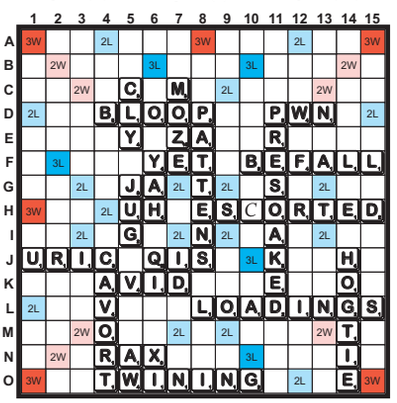
Mackay went on to win the match and claim his fifth BMSC title. Can you find his final bonus word using the following rack on the main board diagram below? (*Hint: it is a word that may also be hyphenated.*)

A D E E E N R

Definitions
MOZE to give a nap to cloth
YAH an informal word for "yes"

Collins Official Scrabble Words is the word authority used.
Word positions use the grid reference plus (a)cross or (d)own.

2L double letter square (dl) 3L triple letter square (tl) 2W double word square (dw) 3W triple word square (tw)



Letter values

1 point: A E I O U L N R S T
2 points: D G
3 points: B C M P
4 points: F H V W Y
K = 5
J X = 8
Q Z = 10

SCRABBLE® is a registered trademark of J. W. Spear & Sons Ltd ©Mattel 2026

Solutions

Killer 10,924

1	7	6	2	8	9	3	5	4
5	8	3	1	6	4	2	7	9
2	9	4	5	3	7	8	1	6
8	6	9	3	2	5	1	4	7
7	3	1	4	9	8	6	2	5
4	5	2	6	7	1	9	8	3
3	1	7	9	4	2	5	6	8
9	2	8	7	5	6	4	3	1
6	4	5	8	1	3	7	9	2

Killer 10,925

9	2	3	5	8	7	6	4	1
5	8	7	4	6	1	2	9	3
6	4	1	3	9	2	5	7	8
8	5	2	1	7	3	9	6	4
1	9	4	6	2	5	3	8	7
7	3	6	8	4	9	1	2	5
3	7	9	2	1	8	4	5	6
4	1	8	9	5	6	7	3	2
2	6	5	7	3	4	8	1	9

KenKen 6935

15× 3	4	5	3− 6	2÷ 1	2
4	1	13+ 6	3	10+ 2	5
1	5	2	2− 4	240× 6	3
17+ 5	6	8× 3	2	4	1
6	2	1	8+ 5	3	4
24× 2	3	4	30× 1	5	6

The Listener 4934

7	2	6	1	9	2 5	8	3	4
5 1	9	3	8	2	4	5	6	7
8	4	5	3	7	6	2	1	9
6 3	7	7 2	6	8	8 1	4	9	5
4	1	8	9	5	7	6	2	3
6	5	9	9 2	4	3	1	7	8
10 5	11 3	4	7	12 1	2	9	8	13 6
14 2	8	7	4	6	9	15 3	5	1
16 9	6	1	5	3	8	7	4	2

Yet Another Sudoku by IOA

For 1ac, 15ac and 2dn, there was only one set of three numbers that fitted together. Then 10dn and 16ac had few options and the need to avoid repeating digits in rows, columns and boxes restricted 11dn, 6dn and 5ac. Similar logic allowed completing the clues and the sudoku in tandem. More details at listenercrossword.com. The winners are Rupert Cousens of Oxford, Oxfordshire; Steven Barnett of Woking, Surrey; Alan Cooper of Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear.

Sudoku 17,097

5	6	8	4	3	1	9	2	7
9	4	1	2	5	7	3	8	6
2	3	7	8	6	9	1	4	5
6	5	9	1	4	8	2	7	3
3	7	4	9	2	6	5	1	8
1	8	2	3	7	5	4	6	9
8	2	5	7	1	3	6	9	4
4	9	6	5	8	2	7	3	1
7	1	3	6	9	4	8	5	2

Sudoku 17,098

7	5	4	3	9	6	8	2	1
8	1	6	5	2	7	4	9	3
9	3	2	1	8	4	6	7	5
6	8	3	4	1	2	9	5	7
4	7	1	9	5	8	3	6	2
2	9	5	6	7	3	1	4	8
1	2	9	8	6	5	7	3	4
3	6	7	2	4	1	5	8	9
5	4	8	7	3	9	2	1	6

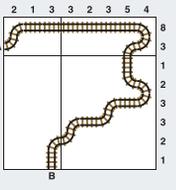
Sudoku 17,099

4	6	8	1	9	3	7	5	2
7	2	9	6	5	8	3	1	4
5	3	1	7	2	4	6	8	9
3	1	5	9	7	6	4	2	8
8	4	6	2	3	1	9	7	5
9	7	2	8	4	5	1	6	3
2	8	7	4	6	9	5	3	1
1	5	4	3	8	7	2	9	6
6	9	3	5	1	2	8	4	7

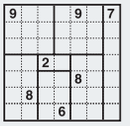
Codeword 5943

S	Q	U	A	R	I	S	H	■	S	P
I	■	R	E	■	A	■	E	■	E	A
F	I	N	C	H	■	M	U	D	■	N
T	■	■	■	O	■	O	■	G	■	T
■	M	E	N	U	■	S	K	Y	L	A
J	■	X	■	S	C	A	N	■	G	E
O	P	E	N	E	R	■	E	M	E	R
K	M	■	■	A	R	E	A	■	A	L
E	X	P	U	N	G	E	■	C	O	M
■	L	■	U	■	C	■	A	■	■	V
T	U	I	■	M	O	O	■	B	O	O
W	■	F	■	B	■	I	■	R	■	I
O	N	Y	X	■	B	L	U	E	B	E

Train Tracks 2968



Cell Blocks 5826



MindGames

Chess By David Howell

Power Moves

A few weeks ago, this column ventured into the murky world of chess politics. Since then, events have moved quickly.

The FIDE president, Arkady Dvorkovich, was sanctioned by the European Union and voluntarily suspended his duties. His running mate, the billionaire Timur Turlov, stepped in as the continuity candidate, opposed by the German businessmen Wadim Rosenstein and Jan Henric Buettner. The election takes place during this month's Chess Olympiad.

On Wednesday, Chess.com hosted a debate between the presidential candidates. It proved suitably chaotic. Rosenstein gave a curious opening speech — not acknowledging Buettner, and referring to mysterious allegations against himself while promising that he would be available "24/7". He then logged off from the broadcast. Turlov and Buettner were left to debate each other.

This drama got me thinking about chess and politics more broadly.

Several of the world's top female players have made the transition into public office. Natalia Zhukova and Antoaneta Stefanova have served as politicians in Ukraine and Bulgaria respectively, while Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen rose to become Speaker of Lithuania's parliament.

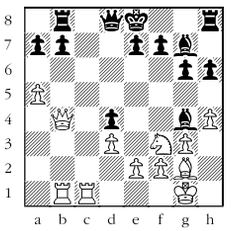
The most striking example almost came this summer. After Péter Magyar replaced Viktor Orbán as Hungary's prime minister, he invited Judit Polgár to become the country's president. The greatest female player of all time declined, saying she was not ready for the responsibility of uniting a divided nation.

From a selfish chess perspective, I am rather glad she did.

For now, attention turns back to the board. The Olympiad begins next week in Uzbekistan, where the hosts will be among the favourites. Their hopes will rest partly on the world championship challenger Javokhir Sindarov.

White: Javokhir Sindarov
Black: Alireza Firouzja
Global Chess League, Bangalore 2026
Symmetrical English Opening

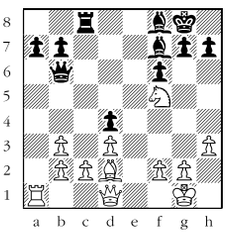
1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 g3 Nc6 4 Bg2 d5 5 cxd5 Nxd5 6 Nc3 g6 7 h4 A trendy idea against any fianchetto. **7...h6 8 0-0** Now 8 h5 g5 would keep the h-file closed. **8...Bg7 9 Nxd5 Qxd5 10 d3 Qe6** A clumsy square. After 10...0-0 11 Be3 Qh5! 12 Rc1 b6 13 d4 Rd8 Black retains equal chances. **11 Be3 Bxb2** There is no way to keep control: 11...b6? 12 d4 leaves Black vulnerable on the h1-a8 diagonal. **12 Rb1 Bg7 13 Qd2 Qd6 14 Rfc1 Nd4 15 a4** Stronger was 15 Nxd4 cxd4 16 Qb2 0-0 17 Bf4 e5 18 Bd2 when White's initiative more than compensates for the pawn. The bishops and rooks are superior to their counterparts. **15...Rb8 16 a5 Bg4 17 Bxd4 cxd4 18 Qb4 Qd8?** Far too ambitious. 18...Qxb4 19 Rxb4 Bxf3 20 Bxf3 b6 was necessary, when Black should be able to hold a draw.



Black is lagging behind in development. Meanwhile, White's pieces are supremely active. Sindarov has great dynamic instincts, and he does not miss his moment to strike. **19 Ne5!** Energetically taking advantage of Black having not yet castled. **19...Bxe5** Alternatives were hardly better: 19...Be6 20 Nc6! bxc6 21 Qxb8. **20 Qb5+ Kf8 21 Qxe5 f6 22 Qf4 h5 23 a6** A tempting move, but 23 Rb5! would have totally frozen Black: 23...Kg7 (23...e5 24 Rxe5) 24 Rc7. **23...b5?** This allows an invasion. 23...e5 was the only way to offer resistance: 24 Qe4 Bf5 25 Qxb7! Rxb7 26 Rxb7 (26 axb7? Ke7 lets Black defend) 26...Bc8 27 Rxa7 Bxa6 28 Rxa6 Kg7 29 Ra7+ Kh6 30 Rcc7. White's rooks dominate, but a winning plan will still take time. **24 Qc7 Bxe2 25 Rb3 Kf7 26 Qxa7** Now White's a-pawn becomes powerful. **26...Bg4 27 Rb4 Rc8 28 Rxc8 Qxc8 29 Qb7 Qc1+ 30 Kh2 Qd2 31 Qd5+ Kg7 32 Qxd4 Qa2 33 a7 Qa5 34 Qc5 Black resigns** There is no longer any way to parry the threats.

Winning Move

White to play. Erdoğmuş-Dubov, Bangalore 2026. How can White exploit a hidden weakness in Black's position?



The first correct entry drawn on Thursday wins *The Times Winning Moves* and *The Times Mindset Puzzles Book 1*. Two runners-up will receive a book prize. Answers on a postcard to: The Times Winning Move, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ, or email winningmove@thetimes.co.uk. Open to 18+, UK and ROI residents only. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Solution to last week's puzzle: 1 f6! wins: **1...Bxf6** (1...Bf4+ 2 g3; 1...Bd5 2 Nxg5 hxg5 3 Qh5) **2 Qe6+ Kh8 3 Qxc6**

The winner is Queenie Legg of Stroud, Gloucestershire. The runners-up are R Stockford of Bessels Green, Kent, and Steve Jenkins of Thornhill, Cardiff.

Bridge By Andrew Robson

Here are some occurrences with about a one in a thousand chance of happening.

Tossing a coin and getting heads ten times in a row.

Rolling the same number on a die five times in a row.

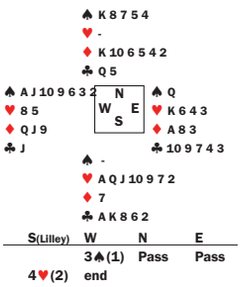
The same number occurring three times in a row on the roulette table.

Guessing correctly which two US states my elder daughter's boyfriend has *not* been to.

Picking up a seven-five-one-zero shape at the bridge table.

David Lilley of Australia certainly made the most of his seven-five-one-zero shape on this week's deal from the Bermuda Bowl in Estoril 2005.

Dealer West N-S Vul



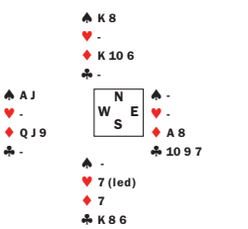
S(Lilley)	W	N	E
	3♠(1)	Pass	Pass
4♥(2)	end		

(1) Weak hand with seven decent spades.
(2) Certainly tempting to bid more than Four. But say he bids Five (as South did at the other table, drifting two down), how will North know whether to bid Six? Better to stick at Four or, if feeling lucky, pot Six.

With such an unsuitable dummy, making even 4♥ took fabulous play. West led his singleton jack of clubs (a normal lead, although the queen of diamonds would have left declarer with no winning option). Plan the play.

Declarer won in hand (as you have to) then led ace-queen of hearts. East won the king and tried a second club (nothing better), hoping West held a third heart.

Winning dummy's queen (West discarding), declarer ruffed a spade (removing East's spade) then ran all his trumps, leaving this ending as the last heart was led.



West and dummy discarded spades but what could East throw? If he let go of a club, declarer could play king and a club, endplaying East to lead from ♦A8, presenting dummy with the king for declarer's tenth trick.

At the table, declarer discarded a diamond. Declarer could then exit with a diamond to East's now bare ace. East was left with ♣1097 and declarer ♣K86. Declarer ducked East's return of the ten but finessed the eight when East next followed with the seven. Ten tricks made.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

The Listener Crossword No 4937 Candidate by Check

Senders of the first three correct entries drawn will receive *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* or may choose from a selection of other books (see below). Send your entry with contact details completed to: Listener Crossword 4937, 5 Ibbetson Rise, Leeds, LS27 7UJ, to arrive by September 24.

Listener 4934 solution on page 45

Prize options and more at listenercrossword.com
More information about Chambers books can be found at chambers.co.uk

Name.....

.....

Address.....

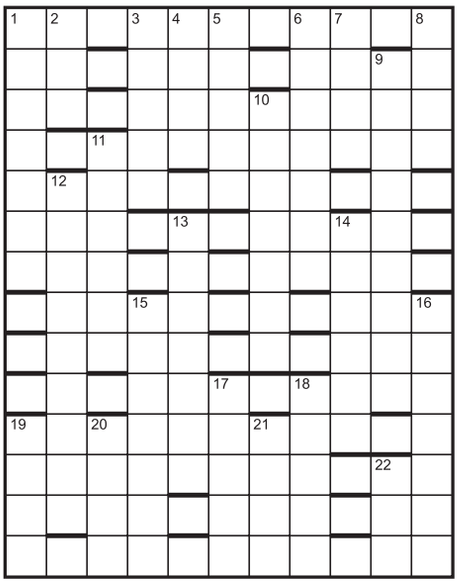
.....

.....

Postcode.....

Email/phone.....

.....



Across clues are given in alphabetical order of their answers, which must be entered where they fit. Vertical bars would display 180-degree symmetry but needn't be shown. One clue per row needs a word removed to enable solving; the words' first and last letters give two names linked by a work. In all other clues, the wordplay leads to the answer with an extra letter (not entered in the grid); the letters lead to a location and an instruction. After filling the grid, rearrange one row into a person's achievement at the location, and its symmetrically opposite row into what the person later became. Then follow the instruction, affecting 19 contiguous cells. *The Chambers Dictionary* (2016) is the primary reference.

Across

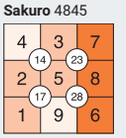
Once again clad with fit dress from Spenser (6)
Without principles, plane split liquor (6)
Renovate seedy bar's primary colours with nicer sumac? (6)
Gent I admire embodies highbrow things (5)
Ruffled one of my people by that base name (8, *two words*)
Lies surrounding stuff like Kevlar? (7)
Klaxon dogs frequently once stuck? (5)
Almost blow focus of shoplifter hiding instrument from Albania (5)
Husband accepted half-hearted arena standard, like dances from near Haiti (9)
Hummingbird core to demo with their cuckoo (6)
Headless allies burying mass bits of info (5)
Educator no longer gets a prime ditz endlessly in a whirl (8)
Insider gets unlimited cash to begin with for old hybrid (4)
Goad idiotic in-law regularly dropping golf (3)
Striking airman doesn't start early (3)
Naughty party culture besets navy staff major-domo? (9)
Impulsive rights movements having special mass in flux (6)
Pen revision, writing third of clues off (3)
Doctor wants to interrupt brief chant (7)
Oriental entity starts abuse to throw at Osaka (3)
Twentieth letter new reader leads off "Tolkien, your dwarf ..." (6)
Nice star mag undresses to work hard (4)

Down

1 Spreads to spread, nice and soft (7)
2 National sanction overturned (3)
3 Dark areas on the moon in area beneath crater (5)
4 Covered walk intrinsic to northwest coast (4)
5 Sign of hesitation in cutting short council (5)
6 Tank tops are central parts of turret protecting spies (7)
7 Profanity is essential (4)
8 Check means missing final in Wembley (4)
9 Celestial shifts keeping academician on edge (9, *three words*)
10 Heather goes after northern students lying about beach activity (7)
11 Trade union care about national limit (6, *two words*)
12 One devastating to resistance supports US agency arresting one (9)
13 Dry fruit overwhelmed by extremely tasteless spice mixes (7)
14 Cons taking in European mugs (6)
15 Groups essentially reframed paltry defeat (7)
16 Favourite losing money after guests periodically join (7, *three words*)
17 Pair wearing azure brought up itches locally (5)
18 Scientist playing our game drops marks (5)
19 Pointedly wound London hospital up (4)
20 Time director parts board (4)
21 Germany's count rising greatly, say (4)
22 Loudly encourage row (3)

Today's Solutions

Sakuro 4845



Cryptic Quintagram
1 Amuse
2 Staple
3 Gravel
4 Cremate
5 Forsaken

Friday's Polygon
adorn, dado, darn, dawn, dosa, dowd, down, downward, **downwards**, draw, drawdown, drawn, drown, nard, onward, onwards, radon, rand, road, saddo, sand, sard, sarod, soda, sward, sword, wand, ward, woad, word.

Scrabble
MISJUDGE, PREJUDGE; REEARNED (F2d) — 61 points.

Word Watch
Cria (a) A baby llama (*Collins*)
Arenaceous (b) Sandy (*Chambers*)
Torve (b) Grim in appearance (*OED*)
Bonheur-du-jour (b) A small desk (*Chambers*)

Mindset
1. ADENINE, CYTOSINE, GUANINE, THYMINE (DNA bases); BLINKY, CLYDE, INKY, PINKY (Pac-Man Ghosts); DIPSY, LAA-LAA, PO, TINKY WINKY (Teletubbies); ARIZONA, COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, UTAH (4 corner states).
2. 989-(8+9)×(8+9) = 989 - 289 = 700
3. The animal is DODO starting in the second row, sixth letter heading SW.

Jumbo crossword No 1809

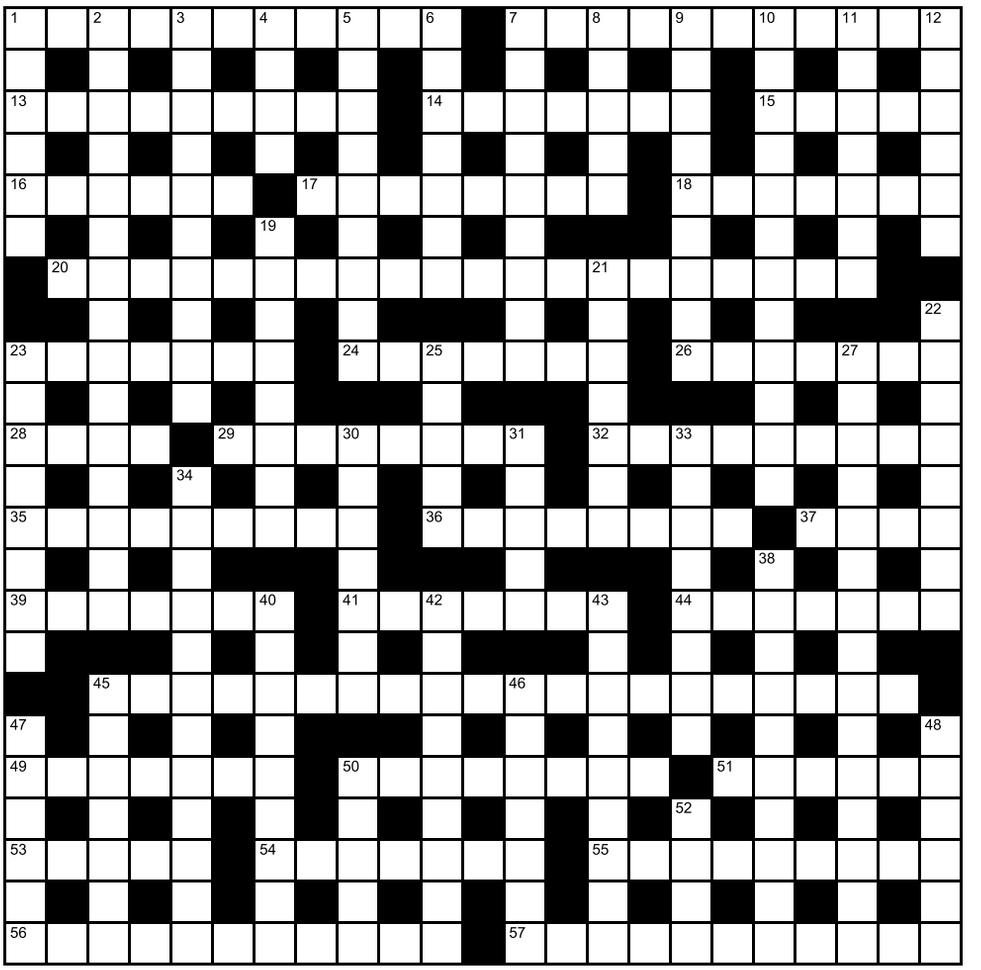
Cryptic clues

Across

1 Action wanes roughly — as does reaction, say I! (5,6)
7 Noted detective's later course (7,4)
13 Security device, iron, beside river, installed during part of weekend (6,3)
14 Peter out to get actors in shape, under pressure? (3-4)
15 Very quiet in support, not forceful (5)
16 Rough garment keeping a long time (6)
17 Storm surrounding first-class pillar (8)
18 United's second defeat in middle of week, travelling (2,5)
20 Drunk's loss of paperwork in gale? (5,6,2,3,4)
23 Church leader welcoming one instrument maker (7)
24 Say a lot of nonsense about love — it's a boost to the self (3,4)
26 Attempt to absorb article after article from Berlin about nutrition (7)
28 Scientist starts to boast of his research (4)
29 Those hoping for returns from US incline to follow intelligence about America (8)
32 Friend capturing beginning of drama in Roman Catholic exam (9)
35 Environmental concern — extraordinary ability around company in this place (9)
36 English still not finished limiting European plan (8)
37 Deception in origins of old articles skewering *Hard Times* (4)
39 Burlesque act to become suddenly popular (4,3)
41 Support succeeded, restraining skittish horse? On the contrary (7)
44 Forgetfulness? The writer's penning note in China, India etc (7)
45 Mathematical method a focus of wage negotiations? Ring us about company's ultimatum initially (12,8)
49 Essentially a means to identify component of meteor shower (7)
50 Copper covered in grain ground by assistant? I'll take the blame (3,5)
51 Plan that is cracked open by introduction of great chatterer (6)
53 Hawaiian building back to front in Hawaiian allotment (5)
54 Power to secure bishop as perfect husband (2,5)
55 Impudent relative suppressing American ailment (9)
56 I note cogent works describing individual development (11)
57 Widely-distributed leaflet regarded as tool (8,3)

Down

1 Island redeveloped units occupying original position (2,4)
2 Ancient king a problem getting on top of male film director (6,9)
3 Meat and potato dish's restriction around extravagant, irrational cuisine, finally (7,3)
4 Regular placements in setting a heating device (4)
5 Time in support repeatedly including advanced discussion (4-1-4)
6 Sign of agreement not on the cards, limiting bishop for certain (2,5)
7 Who might be excited by a sport etc? (9)
8 Broadcasting manner? No going back on that (2,3)
9 Description of noblemen seizing river as proof of ownership (5,4)
10 Something to entertain expert on board, maybe with period not otherwise arranged (12)
11 Seize pence, breaking into international bank (7)
12 Child with hunger, upset in disposition (6)
19 Means to get in uniform, likewise worn by English navy (8)
21 Style of delivery outshines leg (7)
22 Problem in comprehending former lover — lady is baffled about that (8)
23 Literature including book about covering of Toscanini's opera texts (8)
25 Source of oil, as it happens (5)
27 Conflicting sources confused with passport (2,5-8)
30 Show fear, accepting millions in sort of bet (7)
31 Temperature OK, but not at first snug (5)
33 Ready to agree morning permit (8)
34 Motoring offence with nothing on fine received for overindulging (5-7)
38 I note Christian Union mostly unable to shift a lot of old books (10)
40 Broadway comedian lots finally dismissed, making silly point? (9)
42 Lit charge, scrambled — not being this? (9)
43 Church father tucking into more mature edible leaves (4,5)
45 Incline to go the wrong way about rescue vessel where surfing is riskier? (7)
46 It turns up in a sound from duck, mostly on water (7)
47 Vote to replace contents of audio program for Nasa (6)
48 Notices a wide source of oscillation (6)
50 Simple cut? The thing has value (5)
52 You are almost ready for ancient language (4)



NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE NUMBER:

Prizes

The prize for each of the first correct solutions to the Cryptic and times2 Jumbo clues to be opened will be a collection of Times reference books — including The Times Reference Atlas of the World, Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus, and Bradford's Crossword Solver's Dictionary published by HarperCollins. Entries should be marked "Cryptic" or "times2" and sent to: The Times Jumbo Crossword 1809, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ; or emailed to: jumbo@thetimes.co.uk, with "Cryptic 1809" or "times2 1809" in the subject line, to arrive by September 24. Open to 18+, UK & ROI residents only. The winners and the solutions will be published on September 26

times2 clues

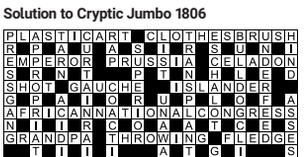
Across

1 Not made public (11)
7 Very surprising (11)
13 Unmarried Italian woman (9)
14 Person practicing clever but unsound reasoning (7)
15 Open sore (5)
16 Very odd or strange (6)
17 Gift, contribution; religious sacrifice (8)
18 Waste material (7)
20 Distance learning system (14,6)
23 Organised gangster (7)
24 Broad heavy knife (7)
26 Sacred place (7)
28 Bovine animals (4)
29 Causing no damage or injury (8)
32 Relating to forebears (9)
35 Shuttlecock game (9)
36 Formal written work dealing with a subject (8)
37 Compass point (4)
39 Current measuring device (7)
41 Long-sleeved pullover (7)
44 Person protected and helped by another (7)
45 Book by Edward Bulwer-Lytton (3,4,4,2,7)
49 Pirate (7)
50 Assign, distribute (8)
51 Jet engine's air entry point (6)
53 Expel from a property (5)
54 Garment worn in bed (7)
55 Warlike, aggressive (9)
56 Main source of control (5,6)
57 Vehicle dashboard instrument (11)

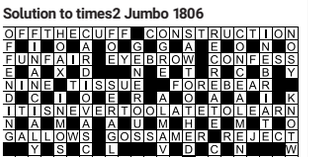
Down

1 Dangerous (6)
2 One of the minimum number of parameters necessary to describe a state of a system (6,2,7)
3 Protected against sudden impact (10)
4 Animal's den (4)
5 Teachers' facility in school (9)
6 Swell under internal pressure (7)
7 Eg toaster or washing machine (9)
8 Object (5)
9 Infamous (9)
10 Determination not to change or yield (12)
11 Lean (7)
12 British soldier of Nepalese origin (6)
19 Having similar vowel sounds (8)
21 Graceful, stylish (7)
22 Egg dish (8)
23 Ray of dim light (8)
25 Top of a ridge (5)
27 Book by Jerome K Jerome (5,3,2,1,4)
30 Habitual way of thinking (7)
31 Perspiration (5)
33 Underground sewage container (8)
34 Gossip (6-6)
38 Collection of similar items (10)
40 Put into a different order (9)
42 Military shoulder piece (9)
43 Capable of being proven wrong (9)
45 Small breed of dog (7)
46 Achievement of a goal (7)
47 Conceal; show (a film) (6)
48 Thin covering of wood (6)
50 General anxiety or dread (5)
52 Walk with heavy steps (4)

Solution to Cryptic Jumbo 1806

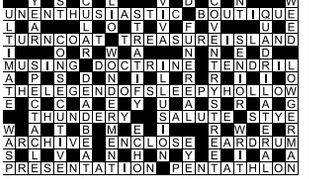


Solution to times2 Jumbo 1806



Solution to Cryptic Jumbo 1807

Solution to times2 Jumbo 1807



The winner of Cryptic Jumbo 1806 is Dave Niblett of Ruscombe, Gloucestershire

The winner of times2 Jumbo 1806 is Stella Dickson of Alderley Edge, Cheshire

The winner of Cryptic Jumbo 1807 is Cameron Smith of Edinburgh

The winner of times2 Jumbo 1807 is T Mawdsley of Blundellsands, Merseyside

One question — four hints
How many will you need?
Try Quizle here or at
thetimes.com/quizle

Jury Prize
Silver Bear
76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin

Best Supporting Performance
Silver Bear
76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin

"A STARTLING PORTRAIT OF INTIMACY"
THE GUARDIAN

"EXTRAORDINARY"
THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"ASTONISHING"
SCREENHUB

"STAGGERINGLY BOLD"
DEADLINE

★★★★★
THE GUARDIAN

★★★★★
SCREENHUB

★★★★
TIME OUT

JULIETTE BINOCHE
TOM COURTENAY
ANNA CALDER-MARSHALL
FLORENCE HUNT

QUEEN AT SEA

A FILM BY **LANCE HAMMER**

IN CINEMAS 18 SEPTEMBER

CURZON FILM

THE TIMES
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12 2026

Sport

PHILIP BROWN/GETTY IMAGES

Party crasher

With England on brink of clinching series whitewash, Pakistan rookie Razaullah blasts nine sixes to leave hosts needing 130 to win

Reports and analysis, Pages 2-4

Arteta: I sabotage my team as a test

Joe Harston

Mikel Arteta has revealed how he deliberately sabotages his Arsenal side's match preparations by delaying meals and making dressing rooms too hot to ensure they are ready for unpredictable events.

Arsenal's flight to Italy for their Champions League win against Napoli on Wednesday night was delayed by three hours because of air traffic control issues. However, the manager says he relishes such situations, knowing that his side are not fazed by unexpected scenarios.

"I love these challenges," Arteta said before Arsenal's trip to Sunderland for a Premier League match tonight. "I try to create them in pre-season and arrive at different times so when they happen we have already experienced it.

"So get to the stadium very late, change the routine and suddenly the players have to do something else. Because when it happens, and it can happen, you can miss the flight, the train can be delayed, there's so much traffic and I don't want the players — not only the players, the staff as well — panicking. So when that happens, adapt to it. Do not complain and use it as an excuse because it's not helpful at all.

"Sometimes we delay the meals, delay the transport, take a different route, make the dressing room hot, less [massage] beds, because we are going to have to adapt so there is not an element of surprise on match day." Arteta has used unorthodox methods to change the culture at the club since his arrival in 2019. He has played opposition anthems, such as Liverpool's *You'll Never Walk Alone*, in training sessions before difficult away matches and hired pickpockets to teach his squad to stay alert.

He has had a 150-year-old olive tree planted at the training ground to emphasise how everybody must nurture the club's roots and he brings a miniature version of it to team talks. Arteta was also behind the club getting a chocolate Labrador called Win after he saw research that showed petting a dog can be calming, improve mood and reduce stress.

Having won three matches from three in the Premier League, as well as opening their Champions League campaign with a 1-0 victory in Naples, Arsenal will hope to continue their perfect start at the Stadium of Light, where they were held 2-2 last season after a stoppage-time equaliser by Bryan Brobbey.

Arteta is approaching seven years in charge at the Emirates, making him the longest-serving manager in the Premier League this season, but has only nine months remaining on his contract. The Spaniard has previously indicated a desire to sign a new deal.

"When I just joined, probably the only thing I was thinking was, what do I do today? And I was big enough, especially when I didn't have any experience to manage any team at any level," he said.

"So then you take the job day by day, and obviously it's been a few years now, which I'm really happy and grateful for, and let's see what happens for the future. We have to have a mid to long-term vision, which is to build the best club in the world.

"But … there are a lot of things that you have to do daily to give you the probability of achieving that. And then you have to rely so much on people. First of all, our owners, and the fantastic motivation and ambition that they have to take this club to that point."

Meanwhile, Arsenal have been working with the management consultants BCG to review parts of their business. It was reported by Sky News that the review could lead to cost-cutting measures on the non-football side of the club, however no outcomes have been reached. Arsenal declined to comment.

Razaullah's brave batting produced nine sixes in his innings of 81

Razaullah's defiance leaves

Mike Atherton
Chief Cricket Correspondent

England v Pakistan

Edgbaston (third day of five): England, with all second-innings wickets in hand, need 130 runs to beat Pakistan

One wonders what the odds would have been at the start of this series on 21-year-old tailender Razaullah making the only hundred? That dramatic possibility came alive during a remarkable last session when he took England's bowlers to the cleaners, making 81 and hitting nine enormous sixes, equalling the record for the number of sixes in an innings by a debutant. Razball has arrived.

It is likely those odds would not have been offered, given that Razaullah was not even in this squad at the start. He is a tailender too, batting at No 9. The context, then, made his innings scarcely believable. He walked to the crease with Pakistan still in arrears, and proceeded to smash the bowling all around the park so that it was England who were foot-weary and frazzled at the close, having lost the plot with the ball.

Razaullah came to the crease at 312 for seven, Pakistan still eight runs from making England bat again. He had already shown, with the wicket of Joe Root from his fourth ball and with four wickets in England's innings, that he is a cricketer of spirit and he set about England's bowlers immediately, swinging ferociously and taking Gus Atkinson for three sixes in one over. For a while, it looked like a bit of tail-end fun, but with Mohammad Abbas offering stout support and making his Test best score, England's concern grew.

Razaullah already has a first-class hundred to his name in a domestic match in Pakistan as an opener, but he was asked to open in the second innings of that match, after his team had followed on and he had been one of the few to score runs in the first innings down the order. He has no real method to speak of, except watching the ball hard and swinging even harder. That, and the conviction and confidence of youth.

It has taken a little-known 21-year-old to spark this series into life. How the crowd roared as Razaullah sent ball after ball into the stands. In the final over of the day he was given out leg-before, erroneously, and the joy from the dressing room was unconfined after his successful review, though it was short-lived as he was stumped with two balls remaining. He was cheered from the field.

So Pakistan made England toil and sweat at last, batting with application and determination initially and then with some stunning late hitting, to make by far their highest score in the series and take the game into the fourth day. It shouldn't prevent Root's team inflicting a first whitewash on Pakistan at home, thus matching the one inflicted by Ben Stokes in Pakistan in 2022, but you never know — especially if Razaullah gets among them. They will need to make 130 to win.

When they began their second innings nought for two, it didn't seem like Pakistan had a chance of making England bat again, but half-centuries for Azan Awais, Shan Masood and Babar Azam, and the partnership of 121 between Razaullah and Abbas, held them at bay. It was a timely corrective to the notion that England's four-man pace attack will automatically be suitable for all comers and all conditions. Root looked lost for ideas as his team were shaken out of their comfort zone and they did not respond well.

It was not necessarily the day England wanted, but it was the day their bowlers needed in some respects to remind them of the rigours of Test cricket and that sterner challenges lie ahead in South Africa and beyond. It also provided scope for Atkinson to get among the wickets again — he took three after a barren series — and for Jordan Cox to show that he is a very capable wicketkeeper.

Cox skipped around energetically, and looked the part standing up to the stumps and back. He took two excellent catches to his left, one when Babar got into a tangle to a short ball and a better one, low down, off Mohammad Imran. Jamie Smith will start the series in South Africa but, with both bat and gloves, Cox has given England options in reserve and his concentration held, too, as the late stumping of Razaullah suggested.

When Masood and Awais brought up their hundred partnership, which came just before morning drinks, it was the first for Pakistan in the series. To get there, Masood needed slices of luck, dropped the previous evening on 13 by Ben Duckett at slip and again in the morning on 40 by the substitute fielder, Theo Wylie, at backward point. Root, full of empathy, was quick to console the young Warwickshire player.

For once, things did not run England's way. Root moved Duckett from third slip to leg slip, only for Masood to edge the next ball to where Duckett would have been. Awais was hit on the glove by a flyer from Atkinson, but the ball flew harmlessly into a gap on the leg side. The next ball after that, Awais was fully forward, sniffing the ball, a further sign of his excellent temperament.

Root, finally, was forced to turn to Dan Lawrence's spin. Wouldn't you know it, Awais pushed forward to Lawrence's second ball and feathered it down the leg side to Cox. Root was the

It was a frustrating and wicketless day for Robinson

Scoreboard

PAKISTAN First Innings **133**

(J Tongue 4 for 42)

ENGLAND First Innings **453**

(H Brook 75, J Smith 69, D Lawrence 65, E Gay 60, O Robinson 50; Razaullah 4 for 148

PAKISTAN Second Innings	**R**	**B**	**M**
(overnight 52-2)			
Azan Awais c Cox b Lawrence	**59**	84	147
Shan Masood c Lawrence b Atkinson	**95**	148	236
***Babar Azam** c Cox b Tongue	**76**	103	161
Saud Shakeel c Gay b Archer	**29**	59	102
†Muhammad Ghori c Cox b Atkinson	**16**	27	50
Mohammad Randhawa c Cox b Atkinson	**4**	24	26
Razaullah st Cox b Lawrence	**81**	63	117
Mohammad Abbas c Atkinson b Tongue	**42**	67	98
Muhammad Ali not out	**4**	5	7
Extras (b 15, lb 24, nb 4)	**43**		
TOTAL (96.4 overs)	**449**		

Fall of wickets 1-0, 2-0, 3-125, 4-214, 5-278, 6-306, 7-312, 8-318, 9-439.
Bowling Robinson 23-8-54-2; Archer 22-1-120-1; Atkinson 24-3-109-3; Tongue 22-1-106-2; Lawrence 4.4-0-17-2; Brook 1-0-4-0.

PHILIP BROWN/GETTY IMAGES; JAMES MARSH/SHUTTERSTOCK; GRAHAM HUNT/PROSPORTS/SHUTTERSTOCK

England frazzled

Archer celebrates the wicket of Shakeel, who was out for 29 when a short ball from the England bowler forced him to glove a catch to Emilio Gay at short leg

only one who seemed convinced and the review confirmed his intuition. Awais's innings merited a better end.

A change of strategy seemed apparent after lunch as England's bowlers looked to swing, rather than seam the ball, but it was a brilliant piece of fielding that made the difference, when Masood, on 95, edged Atkinson and Lawrence took a stunning one-hander low to his right at fourth slip. Having had so many catches off his bowling put down lately, and having beaten the bat so often, Atkinson deserved this wicket.

Babar had finally begun to look like the player he can be, playing the shot of the day when he imperiously hammered a square drive to the boundary off Josh Tongue, and making his first contribution of the series. With tea looming, Root tried to get the ball changed twice and then directed his bowlers to a short-pitched ploy, the surest signs of toil.

The second of those ploys duly worked. Babar, looking rattled, was almost out twice — upper-cutting to fly slip, where Wylie, the substitute, could not quite keep the catch in play, and then nearly holing out to mid-wicket — before he gloved a lifter down the leg side off Tongue, taken athletically by Cox. On a pitch where the bounce remained true, this was poor batting.

Root persisted with the ploy after tea, and Saud Shakeel was unable to evade a short ball from Jofra Archer, gloving a catch to short leg. England's lead was just 14 by this stage, but with Pakistan's tail thought to be a long one, an innings victory was still a possibility. Young Razaullah, full of defiant spirit, had other ideas.

New star didn't even have a passport when called up by Pakistan

Elizabeth Ammon

As debuts go, they don't come much better than 21-year-old Razaullah's. Plucked from relative obscurity, having never left Pakistan before to join a troubled and chaotic tour of England, he has taken the third Test by storm.

The 21-year-old came in at No 9 during the evening session and battered 81 from 63 balls.

The fast bowler is from Mardan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and plays for Peshawar. He had played only eight first-class matches before being called into Pakistan's squad last week.

Razaullah made his debut for Peshawar last year and does have a first-class century to his name with an average of 27 with the bat.

He came to the attention of the selectors during his Pakistan Super League debut for Rawalpindi this year and was called into a fast-bowling camp for the national side.

But no one predicted that he would be called into the Test squad and his selection was so unexpected that reports in Pakistan said he did not have a passport when he was picked. He had certainly never left Pakistan before and has never played for their under-19 team or their A side.

His phone was also switched off when attempts were made to tell him he had been selected. A coach eventually went to find him, reportedly travelling by motorbike, before the urgent process of arranging his passport and visa began.

Razaullah was one of three Pakistan debutants in this Test, brought into the side after seven players were sent home after the defeat at Lord's.

He was picked primarily for his pace and made an immediate impression. His first balls were all fast, about 89mph, and all straight on a good length.

His first Test wicket was quite the scalp — that of Joe Root, trapped leg-before with his fourth ball. He later dismissed Emilio Gay and finished England's first innings with four for 148 from 23 overs, also dismissing Jamie Smith and Ollie Robinson.

He bowls with pace at a low angle making it skiddy and difficult to face, and some commentors have said there are shades of Waqar Younis in the way he bowls.

Often young Pakistan cricketers learn their cricket using a tape ball which helps with swing and reverse-swing and the angle he bowls from also aids his ability to get the ball to reverse.

With England needing 130 to win today, there is a chance for him to be a hero again with the ball but it was with the bat that he delighted the Edgbaston crowd.

It was clear he has incredible hand-eye coordination and that he wasn't simply slogging. He kept his eye on the ball and played some glorious straight, lofted drives back over the bowler's head. Dispatching Jofra Archer back over his head takes more than just slogging.

"It was difficult when the young lad came in," Marcus Trescothick said after play concluded. "When he hit it, he hit it a long way. He hit it very cleanly."

"I just had to bat," Razaullah told Sky Sports at stumps yesterday, with Urooj Mumtaz translating for the player. "You were the ones who enjoyed it. I was planning to take it long and deep. They bowled in the slot so I was eyeing it up. This is just a journey at the start. I am enjoying it thoroughly. There was no point I was scared."

Dropped duo questioned by nation's cybercrimes agency

Elizabeth Ammon

Mohammad Rizwan and Imam-ul-Haq, two of the players sent home by Pakistan after their heavy defeats in the first two Tests against England, have been questioned by the national cybercrimes investigation agency in Lahore.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) instigated its own internal investigation into the tour, amid allegations of leaks from the dressing room, and confiscated the mobile phones of at least three of the players.

It is not clear what the questioning of Imam, 30, and Rizwan, 34, is about or whether it is related to the PCB's inquiry, which it announced earlier this week.

The board did not name any specific players in relation to its investigation but said it had "initiated an internal disciplinary inquiry following media reports concerning discipline and conduct".

Rizwan, the wicketkeeper-batsman, and Imam, the opener, were summoned for questioning by the cybercrimes agency on Thursday. One of the players is understood to have been there for several hours.

The head of the agency is Mohsin Naqvi, who is also the chairman of the PCB, as well as the federal minister of the interior in the Pakistan government.

It was Naqvi who instigated the sweeping changes to the Test squad when seven players — including Rizwan and Imam — were sent home mid-tour and the head coach, Sarfaraz Ahmed, and his assistant coach were sacked.

Imam was diagnosed with a grade one tear in his left calf after the conclusion of the first day's play at Lord's and did not bat in either of Pakistan's innings.

Aaqib Javed, the PCB's chief selector and director of high performance, publicly questioned the extent of Imam's injury and suggested the opening batsman should have played through the pain. Misbah-ul-Haq, one of the selectors, resigned from his post after the changes to the squad.

Sources close to the Pakistan team have said that the questioning by the cybercrimes agency and the internal PCB investigation could be attempts by senior PCB officials to deflect blame for bad results on to the players and away from any mismanagement at board level.

The PCB has declined to comment on the matter.

BARRY MITCHELL/COLORSPORT/SHUTTERSTOCK

Babar fell for 76 yesterday and has not scored a Test-match century since 2022

‘Fab Four’ claims a distant memory for rattled Babar

Pakistan captain was batting serenely but again succumbed to Root’s short-ball ploy, writes **Steve James**

It was some day for Pakistan, but it could have been even better. This was a day when pride was restored, a contest revived and at last England’s quartet of seamers taken into repeated spells, with the results not entirely satisfactory. By the latter part of the innings, when Razaullah and Mohammad Abbas were batting like Shahid Afridi and Zaheer Abbas, they were thoroughly unsatisfactory, unacceptable even.

At the start of the day the two left-handers Shan Masood and Azan Awais had played resiliently before the latter was unluckily strangled down the leg side off Dan Lawrence’s odd and lesser spotted off spin. Then the captain, Babar Azam, had immediately looked at his most engaged in this series, uniting well with Masood, who was sensationally caught one-handed by the diving Lawrence at fourth slip for 95.

But when another left-hander, Saud Shakeel, began unfurling the cover drives, of which England have seen a good deal this summer, the captain, Joe Root, decided he had had enough. It was time for the bouncers. It is a frequent tactic these days, but not one that had even been considered thus far in this series, such had been the speed with which Pakistan had been dispatched on seaming surfaces. Their top innings score in the series was 194 before yesterday.

But now, for the 61st over of the innings, Root instructed Josh Tongue to rough up Babar, doubtless encouraged by the Pakistan captain having been bounced out by Jofra Archer in the second Test, at Lord’s. It was a good idea, because all of a sudden the game changed, prompting the only period of the day in which England were in charge.

Babar, thus far serene and doubtless contemplating a first Test century in 39 innings, was instantly flustered. From the third ball of the bumper barrage he could easily have been caught by Root diving to his right at short square leg. At the other end he backed away to his first ball from Archer and, though he pulled the next ball for four, he was very nearly caught at deep third man from the next delivery.

Backpedalling, and just touching the boundary cushion with his foot before trying to throw the ball back infield, falling over the rope in the process, was the 20-year-old Theo Wylie, a substitute fielder for the injured Jamie Smith, with Jordan Cox filling in as wicketkeeper.

Wylie had actually caught Masood in the first innings but earlier yesterday had dropped the same batsman at backward point. It was a fairly simple catch, an awful moment of unexpected and unfair scrutiny for Wylie, and Root made sure that he consoled the youngster at the end of the over.

It is one of cricket’s many unfathomable curiosities that such tyros — Wylie has played just a handful of List A matches for Warwickshire — can be thrust into the heat of such an elevated occasion, like a film extra who cannot speak a word. The reason it was not a member of the original England squad? Those players return to their complaining counties as soon as possible, especially at this time of the year, when the County Championship is reaching its climax.

Wylie’s effort at third man was excellent and he later made a brilliant stop, but it was only a matter of time before Babar succumbed. He clearly does not like ducking, which may not be a bad option given the way he tries to hook and pull.

The Archer dismissal at Lord’s was horrible — even if the ball was a beauty in its height, line and pace. With his weight on his front foot and chest showing to the bowler, his hands could not go anywhere. This wicket to Tongue was little different. The delivery was down the leg side — and well caught by Cox — as his cramped hands paddled at the ball.

It seems incongruous now that Babar was once making a claim to extend the fabled “Fab Four” of Root, Kane Williamson, Steve Smith and Virat Kohli to five. Up until that last century in 2022 — against New Zealand in Karachi — he had been averaging 49.25. Since then he has averaged just 30.43 in 20 Tests. It is not a small sample size, and the problems against the short ball will be noted by analysts around the world.

Of course, in making 76 Babar played some exquisite strokes — one straight-driven four off Tongue was probably the best example — but it is not just against bouncers that he gets squared up, with his back shoulder all too eager to reveal itself. Keeping it hidden and staying side-on so that a backswing can be achieved would be much more beneficial.

Unlike Babar, Shakeel can duck bouncers, but Root’s shrewd introduction of a short leg seemed to spook him and he soon gloved Archer to that very position after tea.

However, once Razaullah and Abbas came together for the ninth wicket, all sense and menace disappeared while the worst and most perplexing part of Root’s captaincy was exposed. England were a rabble, unsure whether to bowl bouncers or the usual Test-match length.

England require 130 to win, but who knows what that figure might have been had the Pakistan skipper safely negotiated that spell just before tea? Razaullah could still have been waiting to bat.

Masood made 95 before falling to a sharp catch

Follow England’s run chase today

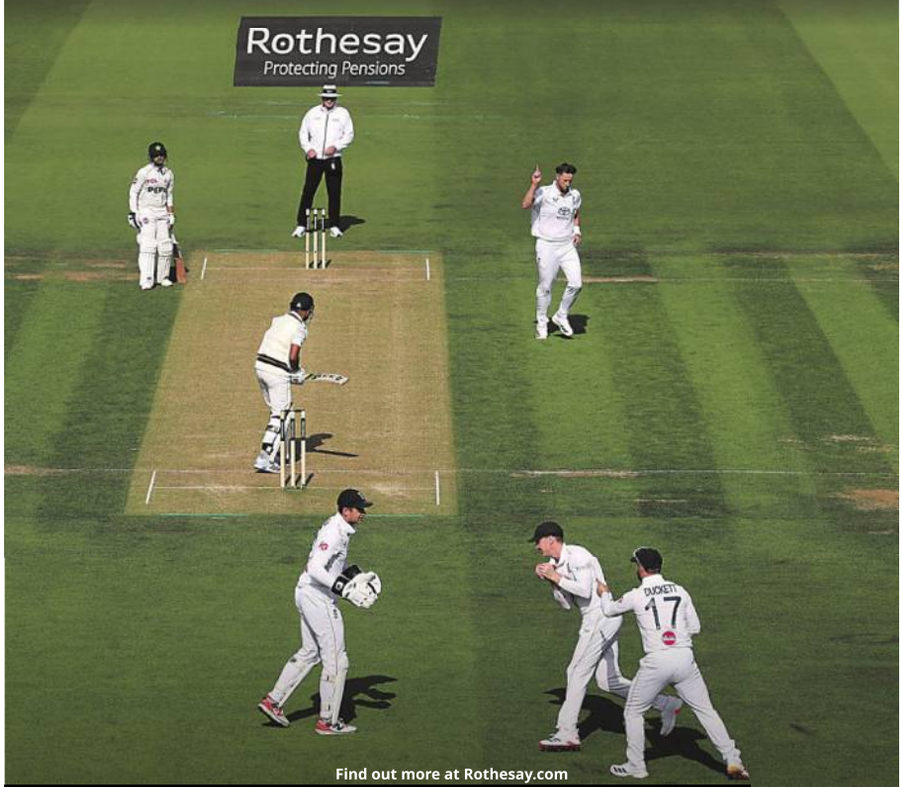
For latest scores and regular updates from our writers from the fourth day at Edgbaston as England look to seal a series whitewash, log on to thetimes.com/sport

Rothesay
Protecting Pensions

Your future in safe hands

Rothesay secures the pensions of nearly one million people.
With the Rothesay Test Series, we are proud to partner
with the ECB in securing the future of Test cricket.

Rothesay
Protecting Pensions
WE ARE ENGLAND CRICKET
OFFICIAL PARTNER



Find out more at Rothesay.com

Rothesay is the trading name for Rothesay Life Plc. Rothesay Life Plc is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

‘Everton are good enough for Europe’

Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall tells **Paul Joyce** how annoyed he has been by meltdowns over club’s lack of transfers

Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall could sense himself becoming more and more irate as the minutes ticked down on deadline day to the transfer window closing.

He spoke to his close friend Jack Grealish as the winger’s return to Everton on loan from Manchester City was confirmed and followed the remainder of the club’s business.

One in, some outs, rumoured targets staying put and, in the case of Monaco’s Folarin Balogun, the collapse of a deal that left David Moyes with only one recognised striker, Thierno Barry.

Dewsbury-Hall started to feel riled by that chaotic few hours — but not for the same reason as those fans who were incandescent that the club’s owner, the Friedkin Group, had not bolstered a small squad.

“I’ve seen all the stuff, all meltdowns and it annoyed me,” he says. “I get where people are coming from, everyone wants to sign everyone and have the perfect squad, but there are still 19 lads in this building who are going to hopefully take this club to good things this year.

“That was getting disregarded. I was seeing people saying, ‘We’ll be lucky to stay up this year’. What message is that sending to the lads who are already here? I’m not blaming anyone. We get it. It didn’t work. But let’s all be positive — right, it’s done, bang, let’s go — and that’s what we’ve been trying to say in the dressing room.

“We realised, ‘Hang on a minute, look around the dressing room — top player, top player, top player.’

“Our starting XI is top, like it’s a European starting XI. I get it, you need a whole squad, but we’ve got 17, 18 [outfield] players at a really, really good level. I don’t think a couple of years ago it was at that level. Actually, I know it wasn’t.”

The manner of Sunday’s 2-2 draw with Manchester United — when Everton twice came from behind, including a 96th-minute equaliser from new signing Ainsley Maitland-Niles — lifted some of the gloom.

TONY MCARDLE/EVERTON FC

Dewsbury-Hall scored eight goals last season and another in the opening match against Palace

Dewsbury-Hall’s ambition, outlined during half an hour in his company, also point the way forward before today’s game against Tottenham Hotspur, whose lavish spending has not had the desired effect.

In many respects, he is the poster boy for how Everton want to conduct their transfer business. Recruited from Chelsea last summer for a bargain £28 million, Dewsbury-Hall’s impact was such that he has been named in a leadership group — James Tarkowski, James Garner and Jordan Pickford are the other members — created to fill the void left by the departure of long-serving club captain Seamus Coleman, who was the glue that held everything together during recent tumultuous times.

Humility prevents Dewsbury-Hall, 28, from saying it, but he is one of the aforementioned “top players” — and recognition of that is widening.

Dewsbury-Hall reveals he was on Thomas Tuchel’s longlist of 55 names for the World Cup and that the FA has been in contact again before England’s Nations League games against Spain, Croatia and Czech Republic (twice). Competition for places in midfield is fierce but representing his country is his dream.

“I know I’m the closest I have ever been now,” he says, justifying his decision to turn down overtures from Ireland, for whom he is eligible through his grandparents. “You get your messages two weeks before the squad is announced. I got it for the longlist for the World Cup and you get it now before these ones.

“[It’s] things you didn’t get before. Physical things like that tell you, ‘I’m getting closer’. It’s a long, long message. It tells you that it’s a legal requirement for us to tell you in advance that you are in contention for a call-up, with the dates on.

“It’s up to me. It’s got to be me that forces his [Tuchel’s] hand.”

To do so, Dewsbury-Hall has a wish list. He knows scrutiny on his second season at Everton will be more intense and craves more goals, to add to his stunning strike against Crystal Palace, and more assists. He wants to win more duels and tackles, and run further for the team.

He will also mentor his fellow midfielder Harrison Armstrong, the 19-year-old whose mooted £40 million move to Nottingham Forest sparked a fan uprising that prompted Everton to back out of the deal.

“He’s respected in the dressing room, for such a young lad,” Dewsbury-Hall says. “If there is anything I can help him with I will.

“I mean, shooting’s one because his shooting is, sometimes, not the best. He always likes to say he’s got a better strike than me, so I just say to him, ‘Just go and look at the Palace one or then go and look at the Wolves goal [from the 3-2 league win at Molineux last season].’”

Collectively, the aims are just as lofty: cup success and European qualification.

Moyes has reaffirmed standards amid the fallout from the transfer window, stressing in a team meeting that he will not tolerate excuses.

“He has been energetic and on it with everything,” Dewsbury-Hall says of the manager. “When you see your gaffer like that, as a player you go, ‘Wow! I can’t be moping around.’”

Yet given Everton’s squad collapsed in the final stretch last term, dropping from seventh to 13th, how can a smaller pool of talent prevail?

Dewsbury-Hall responds immediately: “Experience,” he says. “That was the first year in I don’t know how many where we have been pushing for Europe until the last day. Having that in our locker is massive.

“It was almost alien to us as a club last year, everyone might [have been] jittery behind the scenes. Now if we are in this position again, we know what we did wrong and are learning from those mistakes.

“I know I will, the lads will. That’s the difference this year.”

João Pedro reminds me of Benzema, says Alonso

Peter Rutzler

Xabi Alonso has said that João Pedro reminds him of his old team-mate, the Real Madrid striker and Ballon d’Or winner Karim Benzema, and believes he is already competing at the same level as Manchester City forward Erling Haaland.

João Pedro was awarded the Premier League’s player of the month award for August yesterday and has started the new season in fine form, scoring two goals and providing two assists. His form has earned him a recall to the Brazil squad for this month’s international fixtures, after he missed out on the World Cup this past summer.

Alonso played 195 times alongside Benzema for Real Madrid, between 2009 and 2014, and he believes his striker is among the Premier League’s best performers.

“In many things he reminds me of Benzema, because he is good in the box, he is good out of the box, he is good coming to his left side, he is good with the head, he is very complete, he is intelligent,” Alonso said.

“So yes, still young, still things to develop, but he has many, many absolutely outstanding qualities.

“He’s been top. Not just football-wise, personality-wise, his maturity, his desire.

“He has a very strong goal this year to have a great season, score many goals and a nominee not just for this month but for more months. I’m not surprised but really happy with the kind of player we have with João.

Alonso, left, believes João Pedro is on the same level as City striker Haaland

“I would say he is on the same level as Haaland. If you count how many top strikers we have in the Premier League, I’m sure that João is there, Haaland for sure is there. So I would rate him that way.”

João Pedro signed a new contract with Chelsea last month, and Pedro Neto has now followed suit, signing a new six-year deal with the club.

The Portugal international has already become an important player for the new Chelsea manager, starting every game in a hybrid role as a wing-back.

He had attracted interest from Manchester City in the summer and was linked with Saudi Pro League club Al Hilal, which led Chelsea, in an inflated market for wide forwards, to set his valuation at £100 million.

Neto joined Chelsea from Wolves in 2024 for £54 million, and he has made 108 appearances for the west London club.

“For me he is a winger, you can call him a winger or wing-back because he has many qualities,” said Alonso. “He can play on the last line, he can defend on the first line so he has this capacity to do many things.

“He is good in lvl, he is scoring goals, he has a fantastic work rate. He connects very well with the players around. I knew him well from watching many games from Chelsea. With him you know that he is going to compete and you want this kind of players in your team.”

Alonso confirmed that Moises Caicedo will not be available to play Hull City at Stamford Bridge today, although he is hopeful that the midfielder will return from a calf injury to face Brentford next Friday.

Emanuel Emegha, Marco Palestra and Jordan Henderson also remain sidelined.

Bond of two Enzos – why Maresca had to sign Fernández

Paul Hirst

For the majority of the past ten years, Manchester City's training ground has been a quiet place on transfer deadline day. But this time, the staff were so busy that many of them did not go home until after 1am.

The tension in the offices, which had built over the course of the day, only lifted at 10.29pm when the Premier League signed off on the paperwork for the transfer of Enzo Fernández, the most prized target of them all.

At about 3pm, as Iliman Ndiaye was signing his five-year contract at the City Football Academy (CFA), Fernández, his representatives and a film crew enlisted by the midfielder's agency were driving north to finalise the Argentina midfielder's transfer — a £125 million fee had been agreed with Chelsea around lunchtime.

At 7.50pm, with electrodes strapped to his chest, Fernández was undergoing his medical at the private hospital next to the CFA. A couple of hours later, he signed his double-your-money contract with City, much to the delight of the director of football Hugo Viana and the chief executive Ferran Soriano.

Until June, a transfer looked unlikely, but two things changed the course of history. The first was Real Madrid's decision to pull out of the race to sign Fernández and the second was the appointment of Enzo Maresca as City manager; the player had maintained contact with the Italian since his exit from Stamford Bridge on January 1.

"He is a phenomenal coach with very clear ideas," Fernández said after starring in City's 2-0 win over Porto on Tuesday. "I am very happy to be back with him. I know he made a lot of effort for me to be here so I thank him for giving me this opportunity."

Looking at Fernández's statistics under Maresca, it is easy to see why he enjoys playing for the City manager, who will hope for a big performance from his new signing in tomorrow's Manchester derby at Old Trafford.

In 81 matches under Maresca, he has contributed 15 goals and 20 assists.

The bond between the pair is not rooted in statistics, though; they have a personal connection based on mutual respect and admiration.

There are two episodes in which this shone through. First, Fernández struggled at the start of the 2024-25 season but Maresca and his coaches worked hard to help him improve his game, especially in the attacking sphere, and he responded with three goals in four games.

When Fernández angered several Chelsea team-mates by posting a video of the Argentina squad singing a song that contained a racist slur, Maresca helped with the reconciliation and the player appreciated his help.

City boss defends 'kings of Manchester' boast

Enzo Maresca believes it is "normal" to think that his team are the "Kings of Manchester" and told Manchester United that they have no grounds to complain about having two days fewer to prepare for tomorrow's derby at Old Trafford (Paul Hirst writes).

Michael Carrick, the United manager, said it was "not ideal" that his team played their Champions League match against Sabah 48 hours after Manchester City travelled to Porto.

"To be honest, the club mentioned to me that it happened exactly the same last year when [City] played Napoli and then two days after played Arsenal," Maresca, the City manager, said.

"Sometimes it happens in football. You have to adapt.

"I don't have any doubt that Man United are going to be ready."

Elliot Anderson, who was courted by United early in the summer, proclaimed that City were the "Kings of Manchester" after joining Maresca's team in a £116 million move from Nottingham Forest in July.

"Yeah, probably the reason why Elliot said that is because he grew up in the last 15 years and in that time I think what Manchester City achieved was unbelievable," Maresca said. "It is normal that Elliot said that. If you go back, it's a different picture but when he grew up City was dominant."

Fernández's behaviour over the last few months of his time at Chelsea, after Maresca had departed, crossed the line. He publicly questioned his future at the club and then spoke with Spanish reporters about moving to Real.

One source claimed that Fernández submitted two written transfer requests towards the end of the season, further straining the relationship between the player, his team-mates and the club.

Others brush off claims about a lack of professionalism, stating that Chelsea were a club in chaos last season and he was not the only player wanting out.

Those who know him well talk about the weeks that followed his £106.8 million transfer from Benfica to Chelsea in January 2023, a British record at the time. Fernández is said to have acknowledged that he lacked the fitness required of a Premier League player, so he undertook double sessions — either side of a siesta — and re-evaluated his nutrition and sleeping patterns.

There has been no sign of Fernández behaving badly at City. He has impressed staff and he has made a few new friends in the dressing room, including Marc Guéhi and Erling Haaland.

Maresca wants him to operate on the left-hand side of a midfield three, where he can play decisive balls into the channels for Antoine Semenyo.

He will be a box-to-box midfielder, which was not the case at the start of his Chelsea career when he sat in front of the defence. Fernández has played in a more advanced position for Argentina too. Lionel Scaloni even played him as an attacking left winger at times during this summer's World Cup, which ended with a 1-0 defeat by Spain in the final — and a red card for Fernández.

"He's improving a lot," Maresca said. "Probably in the last two years he became a more attacking midfielder. In the past he was a little bit more deep. He's unbelievable around the box in terms of goals, assists and also in terms of leadership. He's growing a lot."

City also signed Fernández because of his experience of winning trophies — he has one World Cup and one Club World Cup under his belt aged 25 — which is vital given that many of the old guard from the Pep Guardiola era have now departed.

They also believe he will provide leadership after the departures of Rodri and Bernardo Silva, and his aggression is a key attribute, if used correctly.

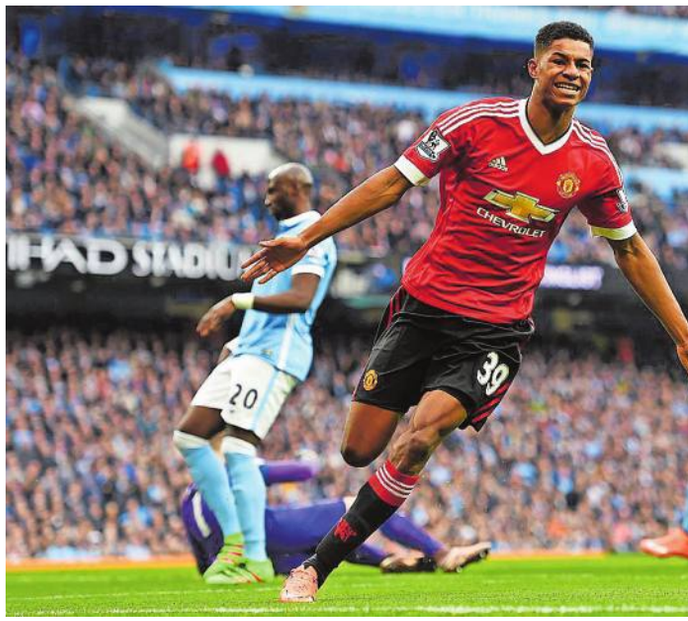
Fans and team-mates get a buzz off seeing a player go into bat for their team, as Fernández did on Tuesday when he told an executive from Porto to "shush" as he tried to antagonise City's players just before half-time. "You can see that his team-mates say he has a winning mentality," Maresca said.

They actually could have signed him much earlier. City's expansive South American scouting network followed him closely after he broke into the River Plate first team in 2021.

Five years on, City have finally got their man — albeit costing them £125million — and they couldn't be happier with the start that Fernández has made.

The fans have already got a song for their new midfielder. "He's in your head… Enzo, Enzo," they sang to the tune of *Zombie*, by the Cranberries, at the Estádio do Dragão on Tuesday night.

Another barnstorming performance at Old Trafford will further endear him to his new fans.



From tardy outcast to

Two years after being dropped for derby, the forward is making most of fresh start at United. By **Charlotte Duncker**

The last time Marcus Rashford was in contention for a Manchester derby he was left out of the match-day squad, and his attitude and work rate were questioned by his manager.

"We try to evaluate everything — training, performance, game performance, engagement with the team-mates, push the team-mates up," Ruben Amorim said after dropping the England international and Alejandro Garnacho from the squad in December 2024.

In short, Rashford's professionalism was being called into question by the Portuguese head coach, and not for the first time. Erik ten Hag had issues with Rashford as well, dropping him for being late to a meeting — an offence he again committed in his early days at Barcelona last season.

Now, nearly two years on from that derby at the Etihad Stadium, the 28-year-old has not only re-established himself back at United, which many at the club never anticipated, he has also proved to be so important to the side in their opening three league games that he was rested by Michael Carrick for the Champions League match against Sabah on Thursday night.

It is a cliché to say that Rashford feels like a new signing — but he does. Expectations cannot have been high given his up-and-down form in recent years, including being farmed out to Aston Villa and Barcelona for loan spells, but he has risen to the challenge.

When Rashford turned up at United's pre-season training camp in Dublin as part of a small group of late arrivals due to their World Cup participation, nobody really knew how it was going to work out. At that stage it was quite obvious he would be staying at

ROBBIE JAY BARRATT/AMA/GETTY IMAGES; CARL RECINE, MICHAEL REGAN/GETTY IMAGES

Man Utd v Man City

Premier League
Old Trafford
Tomorrow, 4.30pm
TV: Sky Sports Main Event

Rashford loves playing against Manchester CIty, and has scored seven goals (including two winners) in his 23 games against them. He scored the winner in his first Manchester derby back in 2016, left, as United beat City 1-0 to all but end their hopes of the Premier League title. The 28-year-old also scored in his most recent derby appearance in March 2024, top, and when playing for Aston Villa while on loan from United in April 2025, above

first at training: Rashford's rebirth

Old Trafford for the season, and after talks over the summer with Carrick, everyone knew where they stood and how he would be viewed in the squad.

For Carrick, who was not in charge when Rashford was sent on loan to Barcelona with an option to buy included in the deal, this was a player he wanted in his squad and anything else that had gone before didn't matter. Rashford, too, appeared to have treated it as a fresh start.

Sources said he fitted in seamlessly with the group, in what could have been an awkward situation, and was open and chatty at the Dublin camp, whereas previously he could sometimes be reserved and quiet.

Any worries that that might be short-lived have been allayed as he has maintained that positive disposition at United's Carrington training ground. Tardiness was a problem in the past but now he is often the first player to arrive for training.

"We're just pleased to have him. He's doing a lot of things really well and settled back in really quickly," Carrick said before the derby at Old Trafford tomorrow.

Which brings us to on-pitch matters. Rashford looked bright after coming off the bench against Hull City on the opening weekend but it has been the past two league games — in which he started against Ipswich Town and Everton — that he has started to show his true level.

His partnership with Luke Shaw down the left, particularly at Hill Dickinson Stadium, looked dangerous. They passed to each other eight times against Everton, with the full back regularly overlapping to get balls into the box, compared with Diogo Dalot and Bryan Mbeumo down the other side, who passed to each other only twice.

The pair have known each other for years and get on well off the pitch too. In the game against Ipswich they exchanged 13 passes, with the right-sided pairing only combining three times.

Of course, Rashford's performances haven't been perfect. In an ideal world he would have opened his goal account for the season, but his movement is causing problems for defenders and opening up space and chances for his team-mates. Only against Ipswich did he register a shot on goal, with two on target, but his direct dribbling and that partnership with Shaw gives enough room for optimism that things could turn out differently for him this time.

He also loves a game against City. He has scored against them in his past two appearances (once for Villa and once for United) albeit in defeats. They are the team he has faced most in his career, appearing 23 times against United's fierce rivals, scoring seven goals (including two winners).

Ryan Giggs revealed in a podcast this week that Pep Guardiola had told him at a dinner that he would "take him tomorrow" in reference to Rashford at City. Can he produce a performance tomorrow that would make Enzo Maresca, Guardiola's successor as City's manager, say the same?

It is only early days, but so far Rashford has done enough to impress his own head coach — something that felt like an impossibility two years ago.

SPORT NOTEBOOK

Martyn Ziegler
Chief Sports Reporter

Abramovich up against the clock to squeeze extra £100m

It will be intriguing to see if Roman Abramovich's company seeks any of the £150million held back from the purchase price of Chelsea by the new owners when a deadline expires next year.

The latest accounts of Abramovich's company Fordstam reiterate that sum, minus any deductions for "proceedings" — such as for fines incurred for rule breaches during the oligarch's ownership — is due to be paid on May 30, 2027.

However, the accounts also say the value of the holdback sum is recognised as being of "nil value" and that there is doubt over "the full recoverability", so the money may have effectively been written off by Fordstam.

Undisclosed payments to agents and intermediaries during Abramovich's ownership resulted in fines of £10million from the league and £10million from the FA this year, and €10million (£8.58million) from Uefa in 2023.

In theory that would leave a balance of more than £100million but no sum is recognised in Fordstam's balance sheet. The accounts state: "Whilst estimation is required in assessing the extent to which such losses may be incurred, it is the director assessment that the fair value of this amount to be £nil as at the balance sheet date due to doubts over its full recoverability."

Fordstam's assets continue to be frozen as a result of Abramovich being sanctioned after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. There is still deadlock with the government over the funds being released to help victims of the war.

Its cash in the bank rose to £2.52billion in the year ending June 30, 2024, thanks to interest income in the year of £113.7million.

Infantino grilling

Gianni Infantino's opponents have decided not to boycott the next Fifa Council meeting, which is due to be held next month, because they want the chance to grill him in person about his aborted plan to sell off stakes in the World Cup to private investors.

Fifa has yet to confirm to Fifa Council members where the meeting will take place — or indeed if it will be held virtually. Whichever it is, however, Infantino can expect a hostile reception and to face questions about why he kept Fifa's ruling board in the dark about his scheme. Members only found out about it when The Times broke the news on July 28.

Jet-set headache

One of the issues that Uefa is having to tackle when it makes decisions on the host venues of Champions League finals is the huge demand for private jets bringing people to the match.

Budapest airport was overwhelmed by demand before last season's final between Paris Saint-Germain and Arsenal, with 280 private jet flights being handled. The airport had to turn down requests from a further 105 private jets. The 2027 final will be at the Estadio Metropolitano in Madrid, which has enough capacity to cover that demand.

Madrid's Bernabéu stadium is up against Morocco's Hassan II stadium in Benslimane to host the 2030 World Cup final. Fifa's under-pressure president Gianni Infantino is said by sources to be supporting Morocco's claim — though perhaps its capacity for private jet flights is not front and centre of his thinking.

Carragher is not taxed by jokes

Jamie Carragher joined in with the jokes at his expense on CBS Sports about his wrangle with HMRC, which has lodged a High Court bankruptcy petition over an unpaid £700,000 tax bill.

When talking about Barcelona's cashflow difficulties, the former Liverpool defender said: "They have had financial problems, haven't they? Well, haven't we all?" Carragher has not been declared bankrupt and his representatives say the case will not proceed any further.

In rehearsals for the Champions League show, the producers played *Taxman* by The Beatles in the studio.

Dinosaur days

Nigel Rushman, the sports marketing fixer who founded and sold Sport Business magazine in the 1990s, channelled his dinosaur tendencies in the latest *Unofficial Partner* podcast.

Rushman criticised South Africa for obliging his company to have a diverse workforce during the 2010 World Cup, and also mourned the lost age of deal-making, saying: "In those days the PAs used to come down to Langan's, sit on your knee, drink a glass of champagne and everyone did deals."

Inside maddest deadline deal: how owner's dash got Fofana

Martin Hardy tells the story of Sunderland owner's intervention at the last minute to stop Palace hijacking move

LEE SMITH/ACTION IMAGES/REUTERS

Fofana showed glimpses of his exciting talent in Sunderland's midweek Carabao Cup win at home to Hull City

Sunderland v Arsenal
Premier League
Tonight, 8pm
TV: TNT Sports 1

Flo Ghisolfi, Sunderland's director of football, was in his office at the Stadium of Light on what he said felt like a 55-hour transfer deadline day when the club's owner, Kyril Louis-Dreyfus, called to say he was going to sort out the Malick Fofana problem.

And no, that's not meant to sound like a line from a Quentin Tarantino film; nor the remake of a North East classic — not so much *Get Carter* as Get Fofana. Yet, what transpired felt like something straight out of a movie.

A brief recap. Sunderland, or more so Ghisolfi, had been tracking Fofana for years and at 11.30am on September 1, deadline day, they agreed a £25.5 million fee (plus £4.3 million in add-ons) with Lyon. Deal done, they thought. Arsenal had also shown serious interest but although Mikel Arteta liked the player, the club's transfer committee decided against moving to sign him.

It was not done yet, however; the Crystal Palace head coach Pierre Sage, who had managed Fofana for a year at Lyon, spoke to the player. Palace offered Fofana better personal terms, raised their offer to Lyon, and thought they had the 21-year-old.

Louis-Dreyfus, the 28-year-old who bought Sunderland five years ago when the club was in League One, was in Switzerland. Fofana, who had said yes to Sunderland in the morning and the same thing to Palace in the afternoon, was still in Lyon. "So we [Ghisolfi and Louis-Dreyfus] spoke," Ghisolfi says. "I was in the office — I couldn't be anywhere else with all the things I have [to do] — and he was in Switzerland. I told him, 'We have this problem.' He said, 'I'm going! I'm not far.'"

"What did I think? It gave me a lot of energy!" Ghisolfi adds, smiling.

Louis-Dreyfus flew to meet Fofana, as he had told Ghisolfi he would do. That was a key moment in wresting back the initiative for Sunderland, but such was the precarious state of play at that point, with the clock ticking and no decision, that a medical was held in Lyon under the watchful eye of both clubs. Only at 10pm did Sunderland get the green light to lodge the paperwork for Fofana's signature and only at a quarter past midnight was it confirmed.

"I feel it was a day with 55 hours," Ghisolfi adds. "It was busy and it was very difficult. The last day was tough. It was a rush! I didn't sleep too much, so you start to be tired, but you need to be lucid.

"For one signature where we made the medical in Lyon at the end of the day, I'm so sorry for the planet, for the environment, because it was a lot of plane for one signature!"

Naturally, after such a flight of fancy, it begs the question of just who Sunderland have signed and why they were prepared to go to such extraordinary lengths to win the race.

Fofana, born in Aaist in Belgium to a Guinean father and a mother from the Philippines, joined Gent's youth academy at the age of nine. At 17 he made his professional debut for the club and scored. At 18, in January 2024, he moved to Lyon and then received a first Belgium call-up when he was 19. His parents moved to France with him.

Why do Sunderland like him so much? He plays with freedom. He will give them a fresh spark in attack. "Playing on the street or in a big stadium is the same for me," he has said. "I don't feel the pressure."

In a summer when Sunderland and Ghisolfi added height to their squad — Thomas Meunier, Kevin Danso and Jules Ahoka are all 6ft 3in, Dayann Methalie is 6ft 2in and Juan Riquelme Angulo 6ft 4in — Fofana is an exception. At 5ft 7in, with rapid acceleration and a desire to dribble past players, he is the one to add something different to the side, to help them unlock teams and win more matches — largely from the left side of a front three. At Lyon, he scored 19 goals in 84 games. He has averaged 8.55 progressive carries per game over the past two seasons, putting him in the top 2 per cent of wingers across Europe's top five leagues.

"He brings talent, and he's someone who doesn't feel the pressure," Ghisolfi adds. "We need players like that. We need to create some difference, not only by the collective game, but by the capacity to create — the one-against-one; fast, attack the space, but also to be good inside, ball into feet."

Fofana's last campaign was impacted greatly by an ankle ligament injury that sidelined him for almost five months. He was back by the end and started three of Lyon's Champions League games at the start of this season, including the 2-1 defeat at home by Fenerbahce, which ultimately led to his sale, with the Ligue 1 club needing to raise funds after missing out on the bounty of a league-phase spot.

"I always believed that he would sign for Sunderland because, in my opinion, it was the right choice for him," Ghisolfi says. "He's a top kid, he's clever, he knows and feels where he can be happy and where he can perform. We know the mentality, we know the personality.

"Unfortunately, in football, this type of situation [the Palace attempted hijack] can happen. I'm sorry for that. It doesn't give a good image of the football industry, for sure. You have to fight in this type of situation."

It was suggested that Palace seemed to be saying they ultimately did not want Fofana because of a possible ankle issue. "No, no, no," Ghisolfi says emphatically. "No issue. We won this time, maybe we'll lose another time, but we are very happy because he is exactly what we need today."

Sunderland fans saw flashes of Fofana's talent on his debut in the Carabao Cup against Hull City in midweek, but today brings the big Premier League debut, against Arsenal, the third club in a complicated transfer triangle. Arteta will get a first-hand view of a daring winger he already knows plenty about.

Bowen sparks rout as West Ham reclaim top spot

West Ham United	**6**
Bowen 28, Piroe 37, Mavropanos 48, Castellanos 63, Kanté 76, Solomon 82	
Wrexham	**0**

Sky Bet Championship
Jon West

Wrexham may be football's documentary darlings but it is West Ham who are providing the Championship's most compelling storylines this season, on and off the pitch.

A barrage of goals from Jarrod Bowen, Joël Piroe, Konstantinos Mavropanos, Taty Castellanos, substitute Mohamadou Kanté and Manor Solomon enabled Nuno Espírito Santo's side to reclaim top spot in style.

Not since November 2021 had West Ham racked up four successive league victories and this uneven contest erased any remaining anxiety generated by a slow start of two draws and a defeat. Promotion already seems likely despite off-field uncertainty caused by the sexual misconduct accusations that prompted David Sullivan to step down as chairman in June.

Daniel Kretinsky is set to become the largest shareholder by acquiring Vanessa Gold's 25.1 per cent shareholding to take his stake to about 46 per cent. That was a disappointment for a consortium led by Amanda Staveley, with the woman who facilitated the Saudi Arabian purchase of Newcastle confirming that her PCP Capital Partners group had also wanted to buy Sullivan's 38.8 per cent holding and gain complete control.

Staveley issued a statement suggesting that could still happen. "Our ambitions for the club remain and we would be open to the opportunity to work with the existing shareholders," it read.

Wrexham were outclassed from the start. Bowen and Piroe had gone close before West Ham took the lead in the 28th minute. Morato, making his first West Ham start, crossed from the left and Bowen, having nipped in ahead of Jacques Ekomié at the near post, deftly deflected the ball across goalkeeper Anthony Patterson.

Piroe made amends in the 37th minute, directly after Mavropanos had blocked George Dobson's shot on the line at the other end. Taty Castellanos, perhaps initially offside, pulled the ball back for Piroe to fire high into the net.

Within three minutes of the second period any Welsh hopes of a stirring comeback were extinguished by Mavropanos. The big Greek defender was unchallenged as he met Bowen's corner, with Patterson, on the line, unable to stop the ball crossing.

Goal No 4 came from a Wrexham corner in the 63rd minute. Kyle Walker-Peters, on for the injured Joël Veltman, carried the ball upfield at pace and ended up setting up the Argentinian for a measured shot into the bottom corner.

Kanté smacked the fifth high into the net from the left of the box after Solomon's pass had breached a weary Wrexham back line. Walker-Peters set up the sixth, with Solomon's shot going in off a defender, the keeper and then a post.

A day that began with West Ham midfielder Edson Álvarez denying he was part of a plot to kidnap a Mexican documentary maker ended with a big statement being made on the pitch.

How they stand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
West Ham	7	4	2	1	20	9	11	14
West Bromwich	6	4	1	1	9	6	3	13
Swansea	6	3	2	1	8	4	4	11
QPR	6	3	2	1	7	4	3	11
Charlton	6	3	2	1	6	7	-1	11
Middlesbrough	5	3	1	1	8	5	3	10
Bristol City	5	3	1	1	9	7	2	10
Millwall	5	3	0	2	10	8	2	9
Norwich	6	3	0	3	10	9	1	9
Sheffield Utd	6	2	3	1	8	8	0	9
Wolves	5	2	2	1	13	10	3	8
Watford	6	2	2	2	6	7	-1	8
Southampton*	6	3	2	1	14	7	7	7
Birmingham	6	1	4	1	8	8	0	7
Stoke	6	2	1	3	9	10	-1	7
Wrexham	7	1	4	2	7	11	-4	7
Portsmouth	5	2	0	3	7	8	-1	6
Blackburn	6	1	2	3	7	9	-2	5
Lincoln City	5	1	2	2	4	6	-2	5
Cardiff	6	0	4	2	7	10	-3	4
Bolton	6	1	1	4	6	12	-6	4
Derby	6	1	1	4	5	11	-6	4
Burnley	6	0	3	3	7	13	-6	3
Preston	6	1	0	5	6	12	-6	3

*deducted 4pts for breaching league rules

WEST HAM UNITED
(4-4-2): M Hermansen — J Veltman (K Walker-Peters 30min), K Mavropanos, M Kilman, Morato (O Scarles 67) — J Bowen (Ajala 81), D Mukasa, A Engels (Orford 81), M Solomon — J Piroe (M Kante 68), T Castellanos. **Booked** Scarles.

WREXHAM
(3-4-2-1): A Patterson — Z Vyner, J Worrall (D Hyam 67), C Doyle — D Imray (I Kabore 67), B Whiteman, G Dobson (M James 67), J Ekomie — C O'Hare, L O'Brien — S Smith (K Moore 67).

Referee S Barrott.

Be polite to restaurant owners if you want to sign for Brentford

Premier League's kings of recruitment seek character references from unusual places, writes **Joe Harston**

In a meeting held on Zoom because of Covid travel restrictions, a 22-year-old Vitaly Janelt watched on flattered and surprised as Brentford's head of recruitment, Lee Dykes, laid bare just how much the club — in the Championship at the time — knew about him.

Playing for Bochum in the Bundesliga 2, Janelt had been on Brentford's radar for several years having been initially scouted while playing in the Germany youth set-up.

The midfielder played under six managers in his 3½ years at Bochum, and by the time Brentford made contact, his minutes were limited — much to the west London club's amazement. However, this gave them the chance to take their research the extra mile, by finding out how he reacted to a lack of game time; would his attitude be suitable? Dykes even tracked down the owner of Janelt's favourite restaurant to get an assessment of his character.

The level of detail in their analysis acted as a huge pull for Janelt to join the club that summer. In fact, Dykes says he has never spoken to a player as set on joining Brentford as Janelt. His role in their promotion that season and subsequently establishing themselves in the top flight is regarded as a classic success story for the club's recruitment strategy.

Years of scouting and a £500,000 fee for a player who was initially brought in to deputise for Christian Norgaard has evolved into Janelt, now 28, becoming one of the squad's most influential players — first under Thomas Frank and now under Keith Andrews.

Six years on, the £41 million club-record fee Brentford paid Lens for Mamadou Sangaré this summer dwarfs their transfer outlay from 2020, but the 24-year-old is already being viewed as another gem unearthed by the club. Though the fees have changed, the methods Brentford use to recruit players remain as meticulous as ever.

The numbers used in their data-driven scouting stem from Smartodds, the sports statistics research company founded by Brentford's owner, Matthew Benham, and where the club's director of football, Phil Giles, was the head of quantitative research. Sangaré initially appeared on the club's radar while playing in Austria. Igor Thiago, the striker who scored 22 Premier League goals last season, was playing in Bulgaria when Brentford started tracking him.

Yet while the data is key, being able to use it to convince the players they identify to join the club is another thing altogether. Sources close to young players signed by Brentfordrecount similar stories of meeting senior figures at the club, such as Dykes, and being blown away by the intricate detail of their research, with data spanning several seasons.

The club compile audio-visual presentations for prospective signings. They often meet in hotels in scenic nearby locations such as Syon Park, and in great depth show the player strengths and development areas of their game, the way Brentford play and, most importantly, how those elements can work together.

One player's agent described their meeting with the club as "eye-opening" for his client, teaching him about aspects of his game he had not previously considered and saying it is rare to see a presentation of this kind being so polished.

Dykes — who was made technical director in 2022 — is crucial in this part of the process. It is said his personal touch goes a long way to convincing players that Brentford's small training ground in Hounslow is where they can develop into a Premier League star.

Brentford have become particularly skilled at selling the club's story — their rise from the lower divisions to the top flight. Players come out of meetings with a picture of a warm, welcoming environment where all of the players and staff know each other. This, and the pull of being based in London, are natural incentives for younger players.

Part of Brentford's story is their ability to develop players and sell them for huge sums. Ivan Toney, Bryan Mbeumo and Yoane Wissa were signed for combined transfer fees in the region of £20 million and sold for more than £150 million. They are not shy about highlighting this track record with young talent and comfortable with their reputation as a "selling club", a phrase that Frank would use regularly.

The prospect of being sold to Manchester United for £65 million six years down the line, as Mbeumo was, is typically enticing for players — although Brentford's desire to keep their wage bill under control means not everyone has fallen for their charms; they missed out on Eberechi Eze, Mykhailo Mudryk and Michael Olise.

"[Making] the decision purely around finances is one I would never recommend for a player personally, certainly at that stage of his career," Andrews said of Sangaré's other options. "That just comes naturally if you're successful and pick the right club. That club isn't always us, for certain individuals, but for Mamadou and the way he goes about his business, you meet him and you speak to him, you can see pretty quickly and feel pretty quickly if someone slots into what we are."

What is most surprising about Sangaré's arrival, though, is that he would have been known to many top European clubs.

Lens finished second in Ligue 1 last season and he was named in the French top flight's team of the season. The question is not so much about how Brentford found him but why he walked away from Champions League football to play for them.

Judging by Andrews's comments, it would appear the club's hard work and characteristic charm have worked once again. This time, it could bring even greater rewards.

Benham, left, brings data and Dykes sells the dream

De Zerbi: No regrets over Richarlison

Tom Allnutt

Roberto De Zerbi said that he has no regrets about leaving Richarlison out of his Premier League squad, despite Tottenham Hotspur's lack of goals this season.

Tottenham have failed to score in any of their first three Premier League matches and face Everton today, the club Richarlison nearly joined at the end of the transfer window.

Richarlison, who was Spurs' top scorer last season with 11 goals, turned down Everton's offer and was then left out of Tottenham's Premier League squad by De Zerbi.

Richarlison has explored the possibility of terminating his contract to seal a move while Spurs have been in talks with Vasco da Gama over a permanent sale. The Brazilian transfer window closes today.

"If I had decided myself to leave him outside of the squad, I would have regrets," De Zerbi said. "But the decision has not even been taken by the club. He has decided by his own."

He added: "I'm sorry because I have one player less on the list. Richarlison is a good guy, a very good guy. I spoke with him a lot of times and I spent time to convince him to stay. But I know the truth. I know what happened in the last month, the last 45 days. And it's clear. I know what the club has done in the last 45 days with him and what was the behaviour of Richarlison."

De Zerbi will be without Mykhailo Mudryk against Everton after the winger suffered what the Italian said was a "stupid injury" in training.

Burnley boss: Killer Vardy is suited to us

Ian Whittell

Jamie Vardy has been earmarked for "20 or 30 minutes" off the bench for struggling Burnley at Swansea City in the Championship today.

Burnley have won just one league game — at Crystal Palace in February — since October 26 last year and signed 40-year-old Vardy this week.

Vardy, who signed as a free agent after scoring seven times in 29 games for relegated Serie A side Cremonese last season, has only trained twice with his new club.

But manager Nick Hayen has no doubt that, 18 months removed from his last top-flight goals with Leicester City, Vardy still has the ability to aid a team that has scored seven times in six winless league games this season.

"In Italy he performed last season, he played more than 2,000 minutes," Hayen said. "That's a lot for someone who is 39. He even scored his goals in one of the most defensive competitions.

"If you score your goals over there you're going to score here. He has the smart runs. He's a killer in the box. That's why he suits us perfectly."

"He's not fit enough to start," Hayen said. "He will be on the bench and when we need him he comes in. I think approximately between 20 and 30 minutes will be the maximum that he can play at the moment."

Forget numbers, Wirtz is playing well, says Iraola

Liverpool manager is happy with German's form despite his lack of goals and assists, writes **Paul Joyce**

Wirtz, pictured battling for the ball with Robin Le Normand during Liverpool's 2-1 win over Atletico in midweek, has had his influence on games questioned

The move started to gather momentum with Florian Wirtz's chest trap and pass, which encouraged Bradley Barcola to flick the ball back to him.

Suddenly, Liverpool were off and running. Wirtz burst into Atletico Madrid's half, a quick glance up, a pass threaded through the legs of Pablo Barrios and Barcola was bearing down on Jan Oblak in the visiting team's goal.

The winger pushed his effort the wrong side of the post and, in the background, Wirtz could be spotted raising his hands to his head in a mix of shock, disappointment and frustration.

In many respects, it was a moment that encapsulated his Liverpool career to date: the threat of something special thwarted at the last, whether the fault was his or one of his team-mates'.

Only 53 seconds later, Andoni Iraola's side had their match-winning goal through Alexis Mac Allister and it was perhaps revealing that without irrefutable evidence of his contribution, opinion was split on Wirtz's performance.

There were those who questioned his influence and others such as former Anfield duo Jamie Carragher, who spied improvement, and Steven Gerrard, who felt a rub of the green would not go amiss as the £116 million signing from Bayer Leverkusen 15 months ago seeks lift-off.

"He deserves a break, he's been under pressure, he's got a lot of stick, a lot of criticism, but I've been impressed with him tonight," said the former Liverpool captain during TNT Sports' coverage of the Champions League tie.

The view that counts the most, of course, belongs to Iraola and he is of a similar belief.

As someone who has questioned the value of xG, Iraola is not hung up on numbers. He prefers to prioritise performance. Wirtz has one assist this term, having provided the pass from which Victor Muñoz equalised in the 2-2 draw with Nottingham Forest, but could easily have three, and a goal, in his first four appearances.

"I can tell you my opinion, I think he played very well against Atletico Madrid and I agree [he has been unlucky]," said the Liverpool head coach. "The game against Ipswich in the second half he lost more balls than normal but, overall, I have been very happy with his performances.

"I remember the 'goal' he scored against Nottingham Forest. They gave it live and then VAR disallowed it. He could have had very good assists but, probably, we haven't finished them.

"But that is why you cannot just play because of the numbers. Whether a striker scores a lot of goals or he doesn't score a lot of goals, you have to look at the performances. Does he help us to play well? Yes? Well, someone will score the goals and someone will give the assists.

"It is not that because you had the last touch, you played better than the other person. I am not too focused about numbers. Nowadays everything is about numbers, everyone tells players you have to assist, you have to score goals. For me you have to help us play well.

"When you are on the pitch and we play well, you have a lot of chances to continue on the pitch. Someone will score the goals and I don't care if it is the midfielders like it was the other day. Someone will score the goals if we are doing well collectively."

Part of that rationale is to take the pressure off his players, and Liverpool's £364 million attacking trident of Wirtz, £125 million Alexander Isak and £123 million Barcola will be thankful for that.

Yet Iraola's faith in Wirtz is, for now, clear. He is, after all, building his team around him, outlining his vision to install him as a No 10 behind Isak during a conversation as soon as Germany were knocked out of the World Cup in the summer.

"I didn't want to disturb him before," said Iraola. "When they lost, I talked to him and I explained more or less what we needed from him. From my side, I told him that I saw him as a No 10 but also someone who can help us in other positions. I prefer him as a No 10. Then I told him a little bit how the team was going to play.

"I think he is an easy to maintain player. Sometimes you have to talk to players a lot but Flo is very professional. He is very focused every day. He trains well. He doesn't need me to be on him because he does the basics very well."

Wirtz is crucial to how Liverpool want to press and his selflessness is evident in some of the statistics that even Iraola might place some emphasis on. Against Atletico, Wirtz covered more distance than any other player on the pitch [12.17 kilometres] and Liverpool made 204 high-intensity pressures in the Spaniard's half which was the most by any team on match-day one in this season's competition.

He has the joint-seventh most pressures [101] in the final third in his three Premier League games to date and those above him are out-and-out forwards in Gonzalo Garcia, Dominic Calvert-Lewin, Igor Thiago, Oliver McBurnie, Joao Pedro and Thierno Barry.

Iraola was asked if Wirtz might run *too* much and said: "No. I think he is a good player out of possession who helps us in our press. But he runs the same as the 10 of Arsenal, the 10 of City, the 10 of Fulham. More or less, his stats are very similar to the No 10s other teams have."

That said, Wirtz is managing twice as many high-intensity pressures per 90 minutes as Arsenal's Martin Odegaard [53.2 v 26.5]. Wirtz boldly predicted in pre-season that his debut campaign in England [seven goals and ten assists in 49 appearances] would help him make more of an impact this time around as he would be attuned to its demands.

Still, Liverpool wanted pacey reinforcements in wide areas in part to help Wirtz, and Barcola and Muñoz are only bedding in.

"The wingers with Bradley and Victor, we have two new weapons that we can use. This relationship with Florian is key. It is key for us. But I am not worried because he understands the game very well. He will quickly learn where Victor prefers the ball or where Bradley prefers the ball. And, also, Bradley in just his second game you could see they already had a good association. I am not very worried."

Areola, centre, has brought in three players that he managed at Real Madrid

Arbeloa knows he's

Peter Rutzler

There is anxiety swirling around Álvaro Arbeloa's tenure at Fulham after only three games of the season. At full-time of another helter-skelter defeat last weekend, at home to a Crystal Palace side who have had similar doubts thrown their way this summer, the Craven Cottage crowd voiced their concern. There were boos and, concerningly, chants of "what the f***ing hell was that".

Fulham supporters are usually measured in their appraisal and while those words will only reflect a smaller part of the fan base, they do show the underlying concerns. Fulham have been exciting going forward. In fact, they have had the most touches in the opposition penalty area of any team while only Manchester City have mustered more shots. But defensively they have looked, at times, a shambles, their attacking chaos leaving cavernous gaps that have been ruthlessly exploited. As a result, they have lost all three of their Premier League games this season.

The fact that Arbeloa is inexperienced — he spent six months as the interim coach at Real Madrid after Xabi Alonso's sacking in January, following six months in charge of Castilla, Real Madrid's second team — means there is not a lot of material for supporters to find reassurance.

Fulham knew this was going to be a big summer of change. Marco Silva had brought Premier League stability during his five years in charge and following in the 49-year-old's footsteps was always going to be difficult. More than that, Fulham needed a squad refresh. Silva built Fulham's security on the shoulders of experience. Going forward, they needed more young talent to bring the average age down, but also to develop and, possibly, sell players. That is a pressure increased by new financial rules — SCR (squad cost ratio) — which ties expenditure to revenue and thus offers less wiggle room for smaller clubs without sales.

But appointing Arbeloa has also led to a major change in tactical approach. He has an aggressive and front-foot style, requiring his players to press higher and take more risks to force turnovers. In attack, his full backs fly up the field, while his "rest defence" — a term translated from German for the defensive organisation of a team when attacking — is relatively sparse in numbers and places emphasis on speed in recovery.

The question is whether this change is too radical, and too quick, for a squad trying to keep pace. Judging from his words on Friday, Arbeloa recognises a need to adjust his approach. "We need to control the transition better," he said. "When we lose the ball, we need to be more compact and choose better when we are going to press high."

ADAM DAVY/PA; MOLLY DARLINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

Castilla: César Palacios, Manuel Ángel and Gonzalo García, right, who signed a five-year deal at Craven Cottage

changed too much, too quickly

Arbeloa has previously said he needs energy for his system to work and that was reflected in the transfer window. Fulham signed four 22-year-olds, a 21-year-old and one 25-year-old. The club have gone all-in on the former Real Madrid coach, underlined by how three of their signings — Gonzalo García, César Palacios and Manuel Ángel — were his players at Real Madrid Castilla.

Two — García and Palacios — also share the same agent as Arbeloa and the concern is that when losing games, any perceived favouritism could lead to issues. García is the marquee arrival and most clubs in the Premier League would have considered an approach. Palacios and Ángel, however, are less well known and also came with a lower price tag.

García and Palacios have started all three league games so far. But it has not gone unnoticed that Ángel, signed on deadline day, made the substitutes' bench against Crystal Palace ahead of Harrison Reed and Kenny Tete — who have 242 Premier League appearances between them.

It was a statement, particularly as, according to Arbeloa, Angel and Hugo Larsson — another deadline day signing — were not yet fully fit. "Manu Angel and Hugo didn't play too many games during the pre-season," Arbeloa said. "[Angel's] last game was, I think, in the beginning of August."

The Fulham squad are generally regarded as a professional group though Arbeloa needs to bring his players with him to make such big change. A flurry of cryptic social media activity from players has not helped. Emile Smith Rowe and Alex Iwobi both archived posts on their Instagram account, including about Fulham, while the winger Kevin, a club-record signing last summer from Shakhtar Donetsk, posted an Instagram story after the match with the caption "no speak, no hear, no see". A not so subtle remark given he was an unused substitute.

Liverpool v Fulham

Premier League, Anfield
Today, 3pm

Smith Rowe and Iwobi's Instagram manoeuvrings have been played down by sources, who say it was not coordinated. Iwobi was subject to boos from fans last week against Palace while Smith Rowe's account is sparsely used .

"I'm not really worried about social media," said Arbeloa. "It's about football. I'm really, really focused on that."

One source called the intrigue a "storm in a tea cup" but there is unease, given the nature of the start to the season. Arbeloa said he had had a clear-the-air meeting with his players, something he does "every Monday, especially when you are not winning". He accepted that Kevin is unhappy, despite being only three games into the season. "If I could play 15 players I would," he said. "Kevin will be important for us.

"Obviously, he's not happy like any other team-mate. I want them to show here in the training session that they are not happy. They need to wait for his opportunity that for sure will come.

"It's a situation that is normal in every club. I don't feel like I have a problem in the dressing room or something like that."

There have been fine margins. Against Chelsea, Fulham were an Antonee Robinson chip away from a 3-3 draw while Palace head coach Pierre Sage was sympathetic to the west London side, given the volume of chances they created. In Josh King, the club have an academy graduate in exhilarating form.

Arbeloa is unlikely to face the sack before the international break, with fixtures against Liverpool and Manchester United to come, though a cup exit to West Ham next week will not help his cause. A better reflection will be after eight matches, because in October the club will face the three newly-promoted sides. That may well be the defining month of his tenure.

GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND'S ACTION

Aston Villa v Nottingham Forest
Today, 3pm
TV: Match of the Day, 11pm

19 Aston Villa rank 19th for expected goals (2.6), 18th for touches in the opposition's box (45) and 16th for xG per shot (0.1) in the Premier League so far this season

Bournemouth v Brentford
Today, 3pm
TV: Match of the Day, 11pm

11 Brentford are unbeaten in 11 league meetings with Bournemouth (W8 D3) since a 1-0 Championship defeat in August 2014

Chelsea v Hull City
Today, 3pm
TV: Match of the Day, 11pm

10 Chelsea have never lost in 10 Premier League meetings with Hull City (W8 D2), only facing Portsmouth more times without losing in the competition (14)

Crystal Palace v Ipswich Town
Today, 3pm
TV: Match of the Day, 11pm

2 Palace won both of their Premier League meetings with Ipswich 1-0 in 2024-25, last winning three league games in a row against them in February 1995

Liverpool v Fulham
Today, 3pm
TV: Match of the Day, 11pm

33 Liverpool have only lost two of 33 previous home league games against Fulham (W23 D8), 1-0 defeats in May 2012 and March 2021

Tottenham v Everton
Today, 5.30pm
TV: Sky Sports Main Event

17 Tottenham have only lost one of their last 17 Premier League home games against Everton (W12 D4), winning their last five since a 0-1 defeat in Sept 2020

Sunderland v Arsenal
Today, 8pm
TV: TNT Sports 1

14 Arsenal have only lost one of their last 14 league visits to Sunderland (W8 D5), winning five of their last seven (D2), although did draw this fixture last season 2-2

Coventry v Brighton
Tomorrow, 2pm
TV: Sky Sports Main Event

3 Coventry have won each of their last three home league games against Brighton, with this their first since a 2-0 Championship win in December 2011

Man Utd v Man City
Tomorrow, 4.30pm
TV: Sky Sports Main Event

1 Manchester City have won just one of their last four Premier League games against United (D1 L2), this after winning five of their six beforehand (L1)

Leeds v Newcastle
Monday, 8pm
TV: Sky Sports Main Event

6 Leeds United are winless in six Premier League games against Newcastle United (D4 L2) since a 2-1 victory at St. James' Park in January 2021

Hull's Thomas 'unscathed' after car flips on to roof

Joe Harston

The Hull City winger Sorba Thomas has escaped injury after his car flipped onto its roof in a crash near the club's training ground.

The club confirmed that the 27-year-old "emerged from his vehicle completely unscathed" after images emerged on social media yesterday morning of his upturned Land Rover Defender.

The incident occurred on Millhouse Wood Lane, a residential street close to Hull's training ground, with the club expressing its "relief" that he was unharmed.

In a statement, Hull said: "The club is aware of images of Sorba's car circulating on social media and can reassure supporters that he has sustained no injuries and emerged from his vehicle completely unscathed."

Thomas, a Wales international, joined the East Yorkshire side from the Championship club Stoke City on deadline day for an initial £7 million, making his debut off the bench in last weekend's goalless draw with Aston Villa.

Hull have enjoyed an impressive start to the Premier League season after promotion. Sergej Jakirovic's side have picked up seven points from their first three matches, including wins over Manchester United at home and Coventry City away. Last Sunday they held Aston Villa to a 0-0 draw at MKM Stadium, meaning they are still yet to concede a goal in the league.

They travel to Stamford Bridge today to face Xabi Alonso's Chelsea, who sit one point behind them in the table.

Thomas was not injured, despite the fact that his Land Rover Defender ended up lying on its roof after a crash on a residential road near the Hull City training ground yesterday morning

Fire v ice: women's final is a fascinating clash of personality

Combustible Sabalenka faces her polar opposite in Rybakina in battle of world's top two in New York. By **Tom Kershaw**

If the writers that used to gather for lunch at the Algonquin Hotel had their way, Coco Gauff would be in the US Open final today. Nowhere indulges patriotism quite like the United States, and Gauff is the candid, amiable superstar who first graced Arthur Ashe Stadium as a teenager and grew up in front of the New York crowd. But elite sport is not a sentimental business. Elena Rybakina, who beat Gauff with barely a flicker of emotion on Thursday, and Aryna Sabalenka have been the two best players in the world this year. The former has just ended the latter's 99-week reign as the world No1 and, despite the short cultural difference from Moscow to Minsk, the pair's rivalry has developed into a fascinating contrast of personality.

Even by her own immutable standards, Sabalenka's season has crossed from the spectacular to spontaneous combustion at the speed of light. She was untouchable in the spring, beating Rybakina twice en route to completing the "Sunshine Double" of Indian Wells and Miami. But the last two grand-slams have ended with the Belarusian threatening to quit tennis and vowing to get completely drunk. The chaos and glamour of New York has always been a good fit for the 28-year-old, though, who can join Chris Evert and Serena Williams as the only women to win three consecutive US Open titles in the open era. Sabalenka has worn 127 carats of gemstones by day and celebrated her largely smooth procession to the final with nightly visits to The Polo Bar, but the appearances and antics are all secondary, as she made abundantly clear to a reporter who alluded to her focus being elsewhere in the early stages of the tournament.

> "Elena just has no reaction ever. You can never see what she's feeling"

Sabalenka was utterly formidable against Jessica Pegula in the semi-finals, bludgeoning the exasperated American into submission. "I think that's probably the best match she's played this year," Pegula, the world No 3, said. "I don't know who pissed her off. Hopefully it wasn't me. She played insane — a super-high level. Honestly, I don't really know if there was much I could do."

That is a fate that befalls most players when Sabalenka is at her imperious best. Their biggest source of hope has instead been that her emotions will spill over irretrievably, which has been the irascible, ear-splitting theme of recent months. But when Sabalenka looked in danger of doing so in a tight first set against Pegula, gesticulating furiously towards her box and flapping her arms in dismay, she was able to harness that rage and played even better.

"I feel mentally and physically really strong right now," Sabalenka said after sealing the 7-5, 6-2 victory.

Rybakina is the polar opposite, a blank canvas that opponents find impossible to read. "She's not nonchalant, but she just has no reaction ever," Gauff said. "We're all feeling nerves and stuff. How much of that she lets get to her, we don't know, and I think that's a strength of hers. You can never see what she's feeling."

Even when Rybakina's coach, Stefano Vukov, who was provisionally suspended last year but later cleared over allegations of a pattern of psychological and verbal abuse, bellows orders loudly during matches, Rybakina barely raises an eyebrow.

That robotic focus — and not least Rybakina's elegantly deadly first serve and destructive groundstrokes — have often proved to be Sabalenka's kryptonite. Rybakina rallied from 3-0 in the deciding set of the Australian Open final in January to claim her second grand-slam title. At the WTA Finals two months earlier, she defeated Sabalenka in straight sets.

That may not have been a major, but the $5.235 million (about £3.9 million) winner's prize — exceeding what was on offer at the Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon — certainly assured it was not taken lightly. Sabalenka has had the edge since then, and Rybakina has been managing an achilles injury, but both in matches and in the world rankings there is so little to split the two finest players in the women's game.

"It's going to be a really tough match," Sabalenka said. "She's a big server. She really improved over the years on the baseline game, so it's going to be physically and mentally tough, but I'm ready for the fight. I'm ready to do everything to get the win, so I'm excited for that match."

As always, Rybakina's battle cry was more subtle. "I will try my best and give it my all," she said.

$5.5m
Prize money for the winners of the men's and women's singles at this year's US Open (about £4.1 million)

Nearly-man Mas on brink — but Roglic still has hope

Cycling
John Westerby

Enric Mas has come close several times before at La Vuelta, but he is now within touching distance of winning his first grand tour.

While Mas, the 31-year-old from Mallorca, may not be one of the sport's biggest names, he has been a regular on the podium at La Vuelta in recent years and if he can protect his slender lead over Primoz Roglic through the final two stages this weekend, the Movistar rider will become the race's first Spanish winner since Alberto Contador in 2014.

Mas has finished on the podium four times, three of which were as runner-up, most recently behind Remco Evenepoel four years ago. Many observers felt that Mas's best years might be behind him and an unremarkable 32nd-place finish at the Giro d'Italia earlier this year did not suggest that great things lay in store. He has only won one general classification at World Tour level in his career, the Tour of Guangxi in 2019.

But Mas has always been a strong climber; he has often thrived in temperatures that other riders find uncomfortable, and much of this year's Vuelta has been ridden in challenging heat.

The 15th stage to Córdoba last weekend was shortened by 80km and Matthew Brennan, the British rider who has soared to prominence by winning five stages on his grand-tour debut, expressed his surprise that racing was continuing in temperatures of 44C. "It wouldn't surprise me if there were a few bodies coming home tonight with heatstroke," Brennan said.

But Mas has relished riding in the Andalucian heat in recent days and has joked that the crowd could help to boost temperatures in his favour. "The heat has suited me," he said. "Perhaps the fans should put the heaters on."

Mas has been helped by the absence of Tadej Pogacar, who crashed out during the eighth stage as he was looking to complete a full set of grand-tour victories, having won his fifth Tour de France this summer and the Giro d'Italia last year.

But Mas had already demonstrated that he was in the form to go toe-to-toe with Pogacar. On the sixth stage, he became the first rider to shut down a Pogacar attack in the mountains for two years.

Mas takes a lead of 1min 37sec into today's penultimate stage as he looks to finally win La Vuelta after four podium finishes and deliver Spain's first champion in its home grand tour since Alberto Contador in 2014

The day after Pogacar crashed out, Mas outsprinted Oscar Onley, the British rider, at the end of a mountain stage to Alto de Aitana, and he has worn the Red Jersey ever since. One potential vulnerability had been Mas's time-trialling, an area of strength for Roglic. But over the 32km time-trial to Jerez de la Frontera on Thursday, Mas held firm, restricting his losses to Roglic to 33sec to maintain a lead of 1min 37sec. "I lost less time than I expected," Mas said. "I'm happy with my day."

He was happy, too, simply to shadow Roglic up the final climb to Peñas Blancas on yesterday's draining 205km stage by the Costa del Sol, the longest of the race, which was won by Eddie Dunbar, the Irish rider.

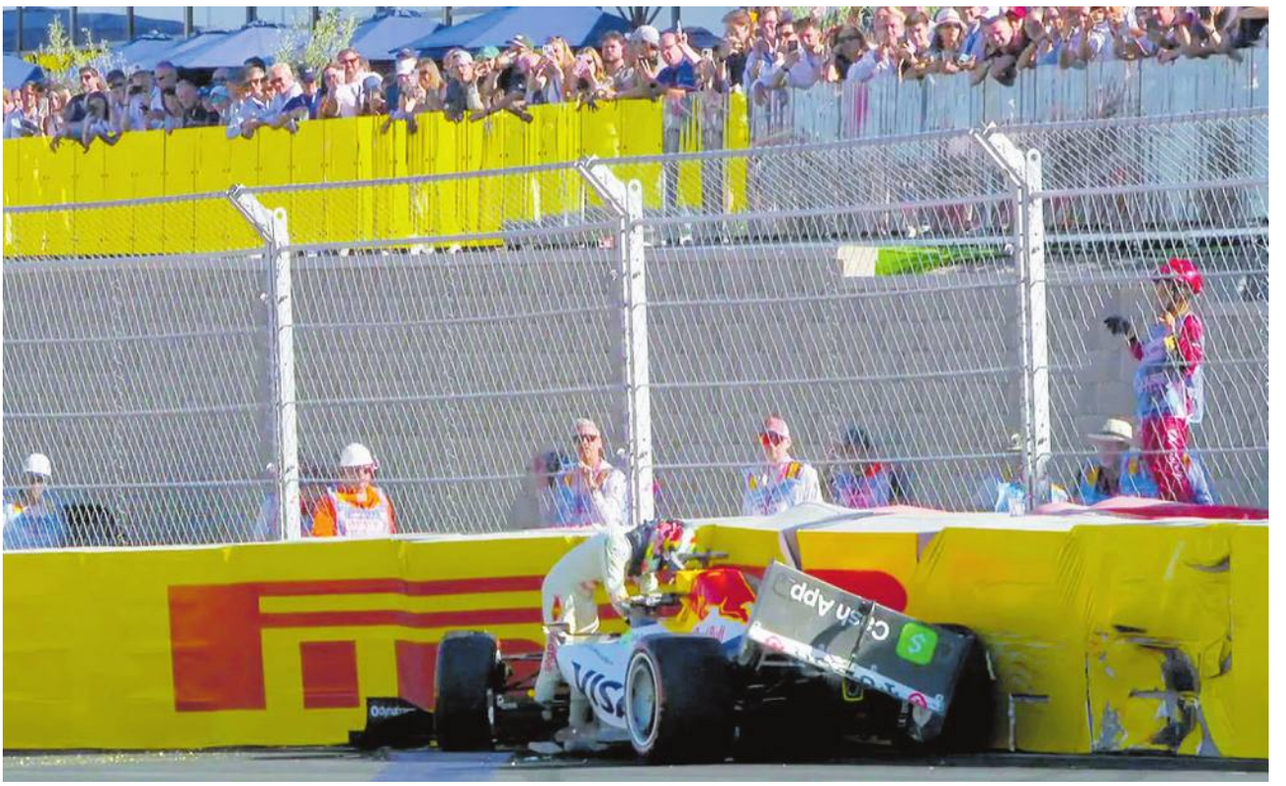
The final two stages still offer hope to Roglic. First, there is a mountainous stage over 187km from La Calahorra to Collado del Alguacil today, finishing with an 8.3km climb over a gradient of 9.8 per cent, an opportunity to claw back time if Mas begins to falter. The final stage tomorrow, starting and finishing in Granada, is unlikely to be a ceremonial procession, featuring a series of short, sharp climbs over cobbles.

Roglic, at 36, is attempting to become the first rider to win La Vuelta for a fifth time. After claiming a fourth victory in 2024, which took him level in the record books with Roberto Heras, Roglic did not compete in La Vuelta last year, having ridden the Tour de France. This year, his preparations were badly affected when he was hit by a car in a training accident in July, forcing him to miss warm-up races at the Clásica San Sebastian and the Vuelta a Burgos.

As a result, he has not quite been a match for Mas in the Spanish mountains but he has still been highly competitive and his time-trialling ability allowed him to leapfrog Felix Gall, the Austrian, into second place. To win that fifth Red Jersey, though, he and his Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe team will have to outmanoeuvre Mas and his Movistar colleagues in the mountains. The crowds will be firmly behind Mas, too, as they long for a first Spanish winner of La Vuelta for 12 years.

Welcome to the Madring – F1's new 'scary' car-wrecking circuit

Molly Hudson
Formula One Correspondent, Madrid



Chicanes and blind corners tested drivers to the limit with Racing Bulls driver Lindblad crashing, above, and Inthraphuvasak hitting a barrier in F2 qualifying, below

It is not often that a Formula 1 circuit provokes the type of language drivers have used this week. "Crazy" was how Esteban Ocon described the Madring. "A bit scary" was Sergio Pérez's verdict. Pierre Gasly joked, "I'll put my money on a red flag," after hitting every wall on the circuit in the simulator.

This is Lewis Hamilton's 20th F1 season, and he described the brand-new track for the Spanish Grand Prix, which had been staged in Barcelona since 1991, as the most difficult he has experienced to find the right driving lines on. He compared it only to the Jeddah Corniche Circuit in Saudi Arabia, which was altered for safety reasons after the first year of racing.

This weekend marks Madrid's return to the F1 calendar for the first time since 1981, when it was held at the Jarama. The 5.414km circuit features elevation changes, blind corners and its showpiece attraction — La Monumental — the longest banked corner in the sport.

In an F3 test here last month there were 19 red flags, three broken chassis and six broken suspensions. "OK, they're F3 drivers, but it's a car-wrecking track," James Vowles, the Williams team principal, said.

While the crashes were spread across the lap, most came in the particularly tricky second sector, which features several chicanes and blind corners.

The British media were sitting with George Russell in the Mercedes motorhome during the F2 practice session yesterday morning, when he abruptly cut short an answer mid-sentence. "Oh wow," he said, looking at the television screen as Tasanapol Inthraphuvasak lost control and hit the barrier backwards at turn 19, his car bursting into flames. The 20-year-old Thai driver jumped out of the car and was unhurt, but it underlined the tiny margins of error here. There were four red flags in F2 qualifying.

"This circuit is mental," Russell said. "There are a lot of really fast corners, but even you see this barrier [with the F2 crash], it's kind of coming back on to the track. So if you are to go wide and hit the wall, you're not hitting it at the same angle as the car is going. The car is going towards the wall but the wall is sort of coming in at you.

"I would put this as a circuit that has less margin [for error] than Monaco, purely because of the speed. In Monaco, the walls are closer but because you're going far slower, if you make a mistake you're not into the wall as quickly and you can recover it sometimes. A small lock-up here, I think there's less margin."

The circuit has installed SAFER (Steel and Foam Energy Reduction) barriers in several sections, which are designed to absorb crash impact and prevent a stricken car from bouncing back into the middle of the track.

La Monumental (turn 12), despite its striking appearance, is one of the corners that drivers are less concerned about, compared to the tricky chicanes. It is a 10-metre high, 547-metre long semi-circular design, inspired by a traditional bullring. At its steepest, the banking angle is 24 per cent.

The gradient is the maximum allowed by the FIA, motor sport's governing body, for safety reasons — Zandvoort in the Netherlands features banking that is technically steeper but does not last as long.

A new F1 track is always a greater challenge for teams and drivers, with their simulators largely based on estimates and information given to them by the FIA because there is no accurate data on crucial elements such as tyre life and grip level.

The latter is important in 2026 because the speed at which a car is capable of going through a corner affects the level of power required, and therefore the energy management needed, with the 50-50 engines split between electrical and internal combustion.

It is a particularly challenging track to find an optimal set-up, with chicanes that will require kerb usage but also fast corners.

"In the simulator, putting together one lap could take me hours," Franco Colapinto, the Alpine driver, said.

It has been a race against time to get the circuit ready, purposely placed at the end of the European stretch in the calendar to give organisers as long as possible to prepare. On media day there were as many construction personnel on site as F1 staff, and as I ran the track at a sedate pace on Thursday, I was overtaken by an excavator and construction vehicles making final tweaks.

The paddock is also unusual, with hospitality suites in a separate area to engineering buildings, meaning team personnel and drivers are given golf buggies to travel from place to place.

In yesterday's first practice session, the times tumbled as drivers built up confidence in their racing lines, much like Monaco. Pirelli's tyres seemed to be suffering, though, with track temperatures of more than 50C.

Seconds are expected to be found between sessions, as the grip levels increase, and drivers were giving themselves extra margin for error, knowing the dangers of the circuit.

Charles Leclerc was close to disaster as he ran wide at turn 17, but mercifully found one of the few areas of run-off, managing to avoid the barriers. Fernando Alonso did tap the wall at the exit of turn 8 but was able to continue.

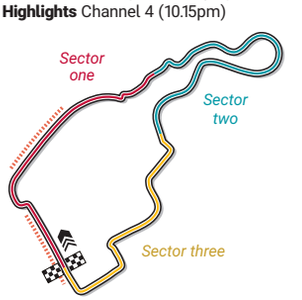
Mike Krack, the Aston Martin team representative said after the first practice session: "We have told our drivers to be conservative to start with, but the pace will ramp up, the grip will ramp up, and we'll get closer to the walls, more aggressive over the kerbs, and then we will see who is the first victim. I think it [a crash] will happen."

Arvid Lindblad duly became the first F1 victim, crashing into the barriers at turn 13 in the second practice session. It caused extensive damage to his Racing Bulls car.

Lando Norris missed the majority of the session with an issue that required his gearbox to be changed.

Race 14 Spain

Qualifying Today 3pm,
Race Tomorrow 2pm, **TV** Sky Sports F1
Highlights Channel 4 (10.15pm)



MADRING Straight mode zone

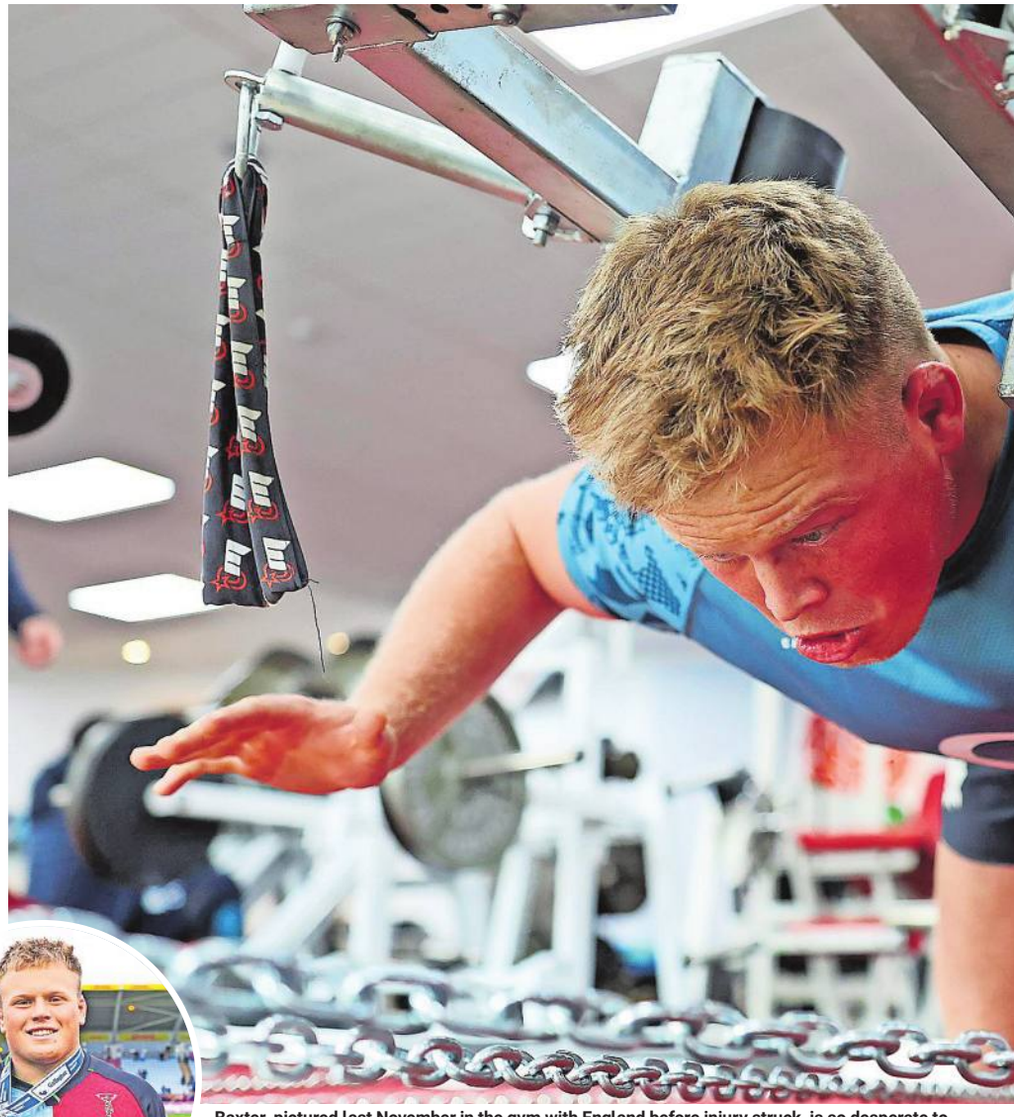
Laps	57
Circuit length	5.414km
Race distance	308.399km

	Drivers	Team	Points
1	**K Antonelli**	**Mercedes**	**267**
2	G Russell	Mercedes	201
3	L Hamilton	Ferrari	191
4	L Norris	McLaren	171
5	C Leclerc	Ferrari	155
6	M Verstappen	Red Bull	127
7	O Piastri	McLaren	116
8	I Hadjar	Red Bull	71
9	L Lawson	Red Bull	51
10	P Gasly	Alpine	41

	Constructors	Points
1	**Mercedes**	**468**
2	Ferrari	346
3	McLaren	287
4	Red Bull	204
5	Racing Bulls	75
6	Alpine	62

‘Last season was minging but new staff are winners’

Prop Fin Baxter tells **Will Kelleher** how watching Harlequins suffer last term while injured was hard, but he’s raring to go for new-look side and England



Baxter, pictured last November in the gym with England before injury struck, is so desperate to

For most of last season Fin Baxter was hurting. His foot was injured, which meant that he was out for six months, and his club, Harlequins, suffered their worst season for 21 years.

Baxter, 24, had established himself as a fine asset to the England team at loose-head prop, swapping starts with Ellis Genge through an autumn in which the team beat the All Blacks, and extended their winning run to 11 Test victories. No doubt Genge benefited from the pressure Baxter put on his position, and England’s scrum was strong with him in it.

Around Christmas last year, Baxter and Harlequins’ season fell in a heap in the same week. The prop had a foot issue in December and pulled out of the club’s annual “Big Game” at Twickenham’s Allianz Stadium during the warm-up. Harlequins were abject and were walloped 40-14 by Bristol Bears, a result from which they never recovered.

By the season’s end Baxter had not played again, and Harlequins finished ninth, with six wins in 18, the fewest since the year they were relegated from the top flight in 2004-05. In the run-up to the new season, Baxter is itching to make up for lost time.

“I’m charging around in training and lads are like, ‘Chill out, please chill out,’” he says.

Baxter’s foot issue was complicated. “It was a problem with my Lisfranc, which is a joint in your foot between the cuneiform, which is like an island bone, and the second metatarsal,” he explains. “They basically put a wire in where that ligament would be to support it while it was healing.

“I got to the point with my foot where I had developed a stress fracture because the wire had changed the way my foot was moving. That was what was taken out at the back end of the season, on the basis of it was kind of altering how my foot was moving. Now it’s out, it’s freer.”

Clearly, feet are important for all rugby players, but few positions stress them more than the front row. The power that Baxter generates in a scrum comes from many places — and he is looking impressively barrel-thick — but there is little a prop can do with their legs, shoulders, arms, chest and neck if their feet are unstable.

“It’s important,” Baxter says. You’re always diligent with rehab, but I know it’s almost like second important to my neck. Hopefully it should hold up.”

Despite missing most of the year — having to be content with entertaining the Princess of Wales in the Twickenham stands when England were hammered 42-21 by Ireland in the Six Nations — Baxter retained his national central contract when they were renewed this summer and hopes to add to his 18 caps.

He has already been in with the national team, at the pre-season alignment camp, and was pleased to have been kept in mind despite his absence — an improvement on years gone by when injured players were quickly out of England’s eyes.

“It is a nice feeling,” Baxter says, having had his enhanced Elite Player Squad contract renewed. “I’ve been in contact over my rehab with England and their interest hadn’t dipped because I was injured. They were still asking how I was doing.”

Baxter can relate to many Harlequins fans’ experience of having to watch them play so listlessly last season. He hated the experience, seeing his boyhood side struggle when there was nothing he could do.

“I now understand what my mum and dad talk about,” Baxter says. “When they said they’ve had a tough day I’m like, ‘I’ve just played and you’ve had a tough day?’ But it is tough watching, not being able to impact.

“It just felt like, ‘Oh, we’re in a tough spot and I can’t add. I can’t even take responsibility,’ which I found really difficult. Where the players sit at the Stoop, I could not sit down. I was walking up and down the stairs, standing up. I just couldn’t stand still. It was actually minging, I really hated it, but hopefully there’s not too much more of that.

“I didn’t have any silver bullets [to help solve the issues] or anything. I was very involved in meetings and a bit of planning anyway. It kind of kept me sane, to keep in that routine of preparing, reviewing and repeat.”

Fresh winds have blown through Harlequins over the summer. Jason

Furbank: Appendicitis hit hard, I thought I just needed to fart

Full back hoping for change of fortunes at Harlequins after his England tour agony, writes **Alex Lowe**

The concept of a one-club man may be a rarity in professional rugby but there are still players so synonymous with a team that it can be jarring to see them in the colours of a rival. This season, it will take a minute to get used to watching Mako Vunipola scrummaging in Leicester Tigers green, Courtney Lawes rampaging around in Sale Sharks blue and George Furbank attacking from deep in the quarters of Harlequins.

The England full back was in the famous Quins kit at the Twickenham Stoop yesterday, posing for a squad photograph with his new team-mates, and Furbank is desperate for this fresh start in southwest London to trigger a timely change in fortunes at the start of England’s World Cup season. The 29-year-old signed off his Northampton Saints career in fairytale fashion, by winning a second Gallagher Prem title, only for misfortune to strike once again on England’s summer tour. Having reclaimed the No 15 jersey and been named in the XV for the Test against South Africa at Ellis Park, Furbank was diagnosed with appendicitis and his tour was over before it had begun.

Furbank has won only 14 caps in six years and has not played a Test match since November 2024 after a succession of injuries, including a complex arm fracture and meniscus damage in his knee. But with Steve Borthwick having now settled on utilising a playmaker in the No15 jersey, Furbank is a key part of England’s game plan leading into the World Cup.

“I’m hoping this is the season [when I catch a break],” he said. “It would be nice to put a run of games together and not have something go wrong. I’m hoping the move reinvigorates, keeps me excited, keeps me hungry to get better.”

Borthwick praised Furbank’s “mental resolve” after naming him in the team to play South Africa because of all the challenges he had overcome to force his way back into the side. Little did anyone know that, within 24 hours, his character would be tested once again.

Furbank has new club colours after helping Northampton win 2026 title

“I felt like I was in a pretty good spot. I was relishing the opportunity. I’ve never played against South Africa and to play at Ellis Park would have been pretty cool,” Furbank said.

“It was gutting. I woke up on the Friday morning and I felt a bit rough. I went and did the team run at the stadium and started feeling worse. It was all my abdomen. The doc had a press around and it was a bit

DAN MULLAN/RFU/GETTY IMAGES

get back playing that his Harlequins team-mates have told him to "chill out" in training as he gears up for the new season

Gilmore has been appointed as head coach, having taken up the role in an interim capacity after Danny Wilson left days before the start of last season, and will report to performance director Robbie Deans.

Rob Hunter, formerly of Exeter Chiefs, is a new hard-nosed forwards coach, and Brad Cooper, who made the Hurricanes the slickest Super Rugby Pacific side, has replaced Nick Evans as the attack coach.

Baxter has been impressed by them, and says they are challenging the status quo at Harlequins — a club that had prioritised entertainment but lost their way by forgetting that attacking prowess is built from strong foundations.

"This new coaching staff are winners," Baxter says. "We're not taking it as a given just because we did something in the past that we're going to keep doing it the same way.

"We've really put emphasis on our set piece and our 'battle' because that ultimately is what allows us to do what people would say is the Quins way, which is throwing the ball around. Without, [former Quins props] Joe Marler, Wilco Louw, Will Collier having a mega scrum and lineout, we couldn't play like that.

"Rob Hunter is putting massive importance on that. We understand that we really have to up our game."

Baxter finds this new focus pleasing as, now he has returned, he can start taking responsibility for his own and his club's performances.

"It puts so much more emphasis and importance on what I do," he says. I want to be the best and being with a coach who's going to keep pushing me like Rob is what I want."

tender over the appendix. We thought we'd best be sure and get it scanned.

"I got the results back at 7pm that evening and found out I had appendicitis. I had to stay in the hospital overnight and have it taken out. It was tough to hear that I was going to miss out again.

"The pain wasn't too bad because it hadn't burst. What I told the boys was that it felt like I had really bad trapped wind. It felt like my stomach was cramping. I was hoping I would just get to the hospital and then just fart and leave. It wasn't agony but it was pretty uncomfortable."

There was no chance of playing? "I think if Eben Etzebeth had hit me in the appendix and it had burst then I'd have been in all sorts of trouble," he said. "I had to wait until Tuesday to fly back. On the flight I actually ended up getting diarrhoea and vomiting, so I was back in hospital when I got back to England because they were worried it was to do with the operation.

Thankfully it wasn't."

> "This move can reinvigorate me, keep me excited, keep me hungry to get better"

Furbank's place in the England team for the summer went to Marcus Smith, with whom he hopes to strike up a fruitful relationship as Harlequins make a fresh start of their own after the chaos and disruption of last season.

Harlequins have recruited Brad Cooper as their attack coach, fresh from steering the Hurricanes to a Super Rugby title with some scintillating rugby. England have talked about a desire to play fast and the game now demands creativity and vision across the back line.

"You look at New Zealand in the first Test against South Africa, the way Damian McKenzie and Ruben Love orchestrated that game. They didn't let South Africa recover, even against a blitz. That's what [you get from] having guys who see space, who are brave enough to call the ball to space, that's what it does," Smith said.

"You look at the best teams in the world, they don't let the defence settle, they don't let the defence recover. They move the ball as soon as possible. Bordeaux scored a try against Bath last year, bent right edge off a scrum and two passes later they scored on the left. That's because Matthieu Jalibert heard a call from out the back.

"It's that connection. Furbs's vision will massively help us get the attack firing. Hopefully, we can showcase the best of ourselves in the quarters."

Cash grab? This result will count in history books

Elgan Alderman

When the Springboks last travelled to the United States after a series against New Zealand, the finale was brought forward by hours and played in secret at a polo ground to limit attention. The attendance, in some accounts, was 29. That was 45 years ago. The 1981 layover occurred after a tour riven by social unrest because of apartheid, and protests were set to continue in the US. The 2026 trip is far from a secret. World Rugby wants everyone to know it is happening, and to spend money on the privilege.

Whereas the Springboks flew alone in 1981, this time the All Blacks joined them on a day-long chartered flight, setting off for Washington a few hours after the final whistle of the third Test in Johannesburg. "I don't think it was too friendly on that flight," Jasper Wiese, the South Africa No 8, said. "I'm not going to sugarcoat it — there wasn't a lot of conversation."

The All Blacks were shattered, the series lost 2-1. Or was it lost? That is a question people have been asking this week. Is the real Rugby's Greatest Rivalry series over? Is the fourth Test at the M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore an exhibition? "Show me the money" after the Lord Mayor's show?

Make no bones: the All Blacks wanted to win *in* South Africa, to emulate "The Incomparables" of 1996, when Sean Fitzpatrick and his exhausted forwards barely had enough energy to pound the turf in delight. They have not done that, but win in Maryland and the ledger will for ever read 2-2. Series drawn.

Regardless of victor, we could do with a humdinger tonight so that commercial imperatives are met by monumental physicality, speed and guile. Count the millions of dollars, sure, but show the US a spectacle too. An epic to rival the greats of Ellis Park: New Zealand's victories by 35-32 in 1997 and 38-27 in 2013, or South Africa's 46-40 win in 2000.

South Africa v New Zealand
Fourth Test, Baltimore
Tonight, 10pm
TV: Sky Sports

The Springboks' previous American experiment, a 22-20 defeat by Wales in Washington eight years ago, was stunningly forgettable. The only memorable aspect was Channel 4's laughable coverage. Never before or since has a camera lingered so long on an assistant referee, Frank Murphy, as he jogged from awarding a penalty back to the halfway line. For the All Blacks, this is their third neutral Test in the US. Ten years ago they suffered their famous 40-29 defeat by Ireland — those sides returned to Chicago last year with worse results — and they swept aside Fiji in San Diego two years ago. Show the customers something better.

This series has been a saga of games, both mind and physical. There have been protractors to measure Ox Nché's scrummaging angles, scoffs at Rassie Erasmus's late team changes, and complaints about referees (a tradition in this contest). Has there been a defining moment? Malcolm Marx's maul try, perhaps. Time will tell if it comes to be recalled like Ricky Januarie's match-winner at Carisbrook, Morné Steyn's 31-point show in Durban, or Richie McCaw and Israel Dagg's three-minute double in Soweto.

South Africa lead the four-Test series 2-1 after a 29-24 win in Johannesburg

The contrasting approaches — South Africa happy to flex muscle, New Zealand running from deep and taking snappy lineouts — will continue. The series "hosts" are in better nick. Erasmus has made two changes to his XV (for now, let's add asterisks until kick-off). Damian Willemse returns at full back, replacing the injured Cheslin Kolbe, and Morne van den Berg switches with Cobus Reinach at scrum half.

Opposite Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu at fly half is not Ruben Love but Richie Mo'unga, one of sweeping changes for New Zealand. Ardie Savea, Luke Jacobson, Quinn Tupaea and Fabian Holland are unavailable. Fletcher Newell, Patrick Tuipulotu, Ethan Blackadder, Anton Lienert-Brown and Mo'unga will make their first starts of the series, while Codie Taylor returns at hooker as captain, and Ethan de Groot and Josh Lord come back into the 23. Leroy Carter, who struggled in defence last weekend, drops out for Josh Moorby on the wing.

Let's give the final word to commerce. This game is the canary down the goldmine. World Rugby hopes the rest of the world will see the riches and plan their own American road trips. They would even support a Six Nations game, heaven forfend. Existing fans already committed to the sport don't feel the need, of course, but governing bodies are responsible for the bottom line. They are caught between sacred cows and cash cows, not knowing what to worship and what to milk. Even Victorians printed gate receipts in the newspaper.

Look, it matters, not just as an enterprise but as a game of rugby. History books will record a result based on four Tests, even though the last one happened in the city known for *The Wire*, a TV show that told us: all the pieces matter. Especially if those pieces are of silver.

Sprinting midwife delivers on Ultimate's glitzy opening night

Matt Lawton
Chief Sports Correspondent, Budapest

When a trainee midwife from Manchester delivers and then talks about how her cut of the biggest prize fund in athletics history will help to pay off her student loan, the importance of the Ultimate Championship comes rather more sharply into focus.

Success Eduan was celebrated for combining her studies with her talent for running fast when was part of a triumphant British relay quartet at last month's European Championships, and in Budapest last night she revealed how she still has to bring four more babies into the world over the course of three more night shifts next week before her degree is completed.

But third place in the mixed relay that opened this glitzy new three-day event enabled her to pocket some much needed cash, even if it remains an awful lot less than the $150,000 available to each of the winners of the individual events. The $24,000 cheque she received after holding off the challenge of the Canadians on the closing leg will be split with her three team-mates, Romell Glave, Imani Lansiquot and Jeremiah Azu.

Success, however, is starting to look like an appropriate name for this very special 21-year-old and it will be interesting to see how she progresses once she has her degree from Salford University and puts her medical career on hold to turn professional. As her coach has revealed in the past, her training can prove especially tough when she turns up to the track on three hours sleep.

Eduan said the money would certainly allow her to put a dent in those student debts. "Absolutely," she said. "But it wasn't really about the prize fund. It was more about the team. We had so much fun out there. This event has been really, really good."

As she explained, her three-year BSc in midwifery concludes very soon. "I still have one more placement," she said. "I didn't get my births two weeks ago. I've got four more left to deliver. I arrive back in Manchester on Monday afternoon and have a shift that night. I've got three nights to do, so I finish on Thursday morning."

This groundbreaking new event started as night fell over Budapest and it certainly got off to a promising start. Usain Bolt thrilled the spectators with an appearance on the track at the beginning of the evening, and the painted black infield stood up well to the heavy rain that fell earlier in the day, creating a stunning setting for the action that followed. Hungary's national athletics stadium is a beautiful arena anyway, but the contrasting shades of the track and the other spaces added to the sense of theatre.

The only negative was the fact that the temperature had dropped to 15C. It will be warmer over the weekend but the women competing in the high jump were wrapped up in sleeping bags between their attempts. By the time the men contested the 5,000m final, though, things had heated up, with the build-up to the race dominated by a row that erupted between the two main protagonists at the Diamond League final in Brussels last weekend.

Jakob Ingebrigtsen did apologise for calling his rivals in that race "losers" but he refused to back down after branding Cole Hocker a "coward" for failing to follow his own pacemaking plan in what the Norwegian found a frustratingly slow 1,500m.

Hocker didn't seem to take too kindly to that, with the Olympic champion even posting a video of their post-race exchange on his YouTube channel on Thursday. But a bit of needle seems to be something that Ingebrigtsen enjoys, because he thrived on the extra pressure he put himself under with a stunning victory.

Ingebrigtsen is not yet back to his best after achilles surgery but he produced something special here to conquer an American who left his own bid for glory far too late.

In what had been a relatively slow race, Ingebrigtsen waited until they were coming off the final bend to attack. But when he forced his way out of trouble and accelerated past Parker Wolfe, Hocker was too far back to close the gap and settled for second. Ingebrigtsen had closed in less than 55 seconds for the final 400m, with the concluding 100m covered in a fraction over 12 seconds; serious speed at the end of such a race and enough to win by two or three metres in 12min 59.24sec. "He's so good over 5,000m," Hocker said generously afterwards.

The evening also featured Keely Hodgkinson's return to the track, and she made it through to today's 800m final with a commanding display in her semi-final. She won comfortably in 1min 57.57sec, with her rivals Audrey Werro and Femke Broeders-Bol also progressing easily from the other heat.

There was another healthy payday for Jaz Sawyers. She has already won Commonwealth gold and European silver in the long jump this season but second in this competition, with a leap of 6.78m, earned her $75,000. "It's an incredible amount of money," she said. "It will allow me to spend another year as a professional and I might treat myself to a new sewing machine."

What to watch today

Saturday night is when the Ultimate Championship really comes alive, with the men's and women's 100m final concluding the second session and plenty of British interest prior to that. In particular, the cream of female UK middle distance running will be in action, with Georgia Hunter Bell hoping to add the Ultimate Championship 1,500m trophy to three major championship golds she had already won this year and Keely Hodgkinson returning for what promises to be a classic contest over 800m. A hamstring issue has kept the Olympic champion on the sidelines since last month's European Championships, but she is back for another encounter with Audrey Werro and Femke Broeders-Bol.

Eduan, a trainee midwife, took the last leg of the 4x100m relay as Great Britain

Athletes waiting for quarter

Matt Lawton
Chief Sports Correspondent, Budapest

The athletes who participated in the Michael Johnson-led Grand Slam Track league are still waiting for significant sums of money despite competing in the events almost 18 months ago.

Many of those track and field stars are in Budapest this weekend chasing the biggest payday in the history of their sport, with $150,000 (about £110,000) going to the winners of the 28 events that make up the inaugural Ultimate Championship.

But this was something Johnson also tried to deliver before the collapse of his ill-fated four-meet series concluded with a Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the US, with the athletes due to receive about 70 per cent of what they were promised and vendors collectively owed multiple millions getting just 14 per cent. For Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, the Olympic 400m hurdles and world 400m champion, who was initially owed more than $350,000, that amounts to a loss of more than $100,000. Josh Kerr's losses have been estimated at more than $60,000.

In an interview with The Daily Telegraph last month, Johnson said he had finally "got the athletes paid" after a "catastrophic capital issue" caused by the loss of a major financial backer who stepped away after the first event, in Jamaica, proved so unsuccessful.

RESULTS

American football

NFL Los Angeles Rams 7 San Francisco 27.

Cricket

Rothesay County Championship
Division One
Nottinghamshire v Hampshire

Trent Bridge (final day of four): Nottinghamshire (22pts) beat Hampshire (4) by 54 runs

Nottinghamshire First Innings 377 (J M Clarke 105, L A Patterson-White 92; K J Abbott 4 for 82, S W Currie 4 for 61)
Second Innings 104 (E T Lumsden 5 for 36)

Hampshire First Innings 304 (J S Lehmann 133 not out)
Second Innings (overnight 61-5)

B A Mayes c Hay b Stone	25
S W Currie not out	44
E V Jack c Hay b Stone	0
K J Abbott lbw b Stone	1
E T Lumsden c sub b Sheat	21
Extras (lb 5)	5
Total (49.2 overs)	**123**

Fall of wickets 1-8, 2-8, 3-11, 4-11, 5-27, 6-27, 7-68, 8-68, 9-80.
Bowling Stone 14-4-28-6; Pennington 16-4-33-3; Sheat 10.2-1-32-1; Giles 8-0-25-0; Patterson-White 1-1-0-0.

Sussex v Surrey

Hove (final day of four): Sussex (14pts) drew with Surrey (13)

Sussex First Innings 393 (C J Tear 89, J A Simpson 61, O J Carter 59; R D Chahar 4 for 97)
Second Innings

G W Thomas lbw b Fisher	4
*T J Haines c Burns b Chahar	63
C J Tear lbw b Lomror	39
O J Carter not out	37
J M Coles not out	16
Extras (b 1, lb 5, nb 2)	8
Total (3 wkts dec, 65 overs)	**167**

Fall of wickets 1-13, 2-103, 3-131.
Bowling Worrall 6-2-22-0; Fisher 6-2-5-1; Lomror 20-3-46-1; Chahar 22-3-51-1; Lawes 4-0-28-0; Thomas 6-1-9-0; Pope 1-1-0-0.

Surrey First Innings (overnight 284-7)

A R G Thomas c Thomas b Coles	44
M D Fisher c Hunt b Unadkat	35
R D Chahar c Simpson b Karvelas	0
D J Worrall not out	14
Extras (b 4, lb 6, nb 10)	20
Total (104.4 overs)	**321**

Fall of wickets 1-39, 2-44, 3-47, 4-158, 5-166, 6-250, 7-251, 8-299, 9-302.
Bowling Unadkat 19.4-5-60-2; Hunt 20-2-65-3; Karvelas 16-3-53-2; Haines 13-3-28-1; Coles 11-0-45-1; Carson 22-3-47-1; Leaning 3-0-13-0.

Division Two: Derbyshire v Kent

Derby (final day of four): Derbyshire (21pts) beat Kent (3) by 181 runs

Derbyshire First Innings 300 (M Andersson 129 not out; H Mahmud 4 for 30)
Second innings 352-8 dec (B Guest 75 not out, L Reece 53, H Came 51, M Andersson 50)

Kent First Innings 219 (B Aitchison 4 for 58)
Second Innings (overnight 3-0)

Z Crawley c Andersson b Aitchison	4
B Compton c Guest b Aitchison	4
S Northeast c Guest b Aitchison	1
T Muyeye c Montgomery b Aitchison	11
*D Bell-Drummond c Reece b Aitchison	12
†C Benjamin b Randell	32
E Singh c Andersson b Randell	59
G Stewart lbw Andersson	65
B Foreman lbw Bashir	38
H Mahmud c Guest b Randell	9
K Ahmed not out	1
Extras (b 8, lb 5, nb 2, w 1)	16
Total (95.3 overs)	**252**

Fall of wickets 1-8, 2-11, 3-12, 4-27, 5-38, 6-129, 7-144, 8-218, 9-251.
Bowling Bashir 27-5-60-1; Morley 22-3-59-0; Aitchison 2-06-44-5; Randell 14.3-4-39-3; Andersson 6-2-13-1; Montgomery 5-1-20-0; Reece 1-0-4-0.

Durham v Middlesex

Chester-le-Street (final day of four): Durham (20pts) beat Middlesex (3) by 93 runs

Durham First Innings 252 (B Raine 58 not out; S Morgan 4 for 78)
Second Innings 374 (B S McKinney 184)

Middlesex First Innings 203 (B Carse 5 for 72)
Second Innings (overnight 55-2)

N Fernandes c Rhodes b Aldridge	3
*M Holden c McKinney b Rhodes	32
B Geddes c Agarwal b Parkinson	50
R Higgins c Clark b Parkinson	31
†H Duke not out	100
Z Gohar b Parkinson	15
S Morgan lbw Carse	4
T Helm lbw Parkinson	32
N Sharma c Robinson b Carse	1
Extras (b 1, lb 9, nb 4, w 11)	25
Total (78 overs)	**330**

Fall of wickets 1-38, 2-47, 3-55, 4-97, 5-161, 6-166, 7-186, 8-210, 9-289.
Bowling Raine 20-5-70-0; Carse 21-1-116-4; Aldridge 11-1-68-1; Rhodes 4-0-21-1; Parkinson 22-6-45-4.

Lancashire v Gloucestershire

Old Trafford (final day of four): Gloucestershire (19pts) beat Lancashire (3) by 105 runs

Gloucestershire First Innings 212 (D Ahmed 51; G Balderson 4 for 44)
Second Innings 169 (K Dhariwal 66; G Balderson 4 for 31)

Lancashire First Innings 134 (W Williams 6 for 24)
Second Innings (overnight 120-6)

R Flintoff c Taylor b Langridge	65
G Balderson c Price b Langridge	0
N Ali lbw b Langridge	9
M Stanley c Dhariwal b Kishore	0
*J Anderson not out	0
Extras (lb 1, w b 4, lb 2, w 1)	7
Total (41.4 overs)	**142**

Fall of wickets 1-4, 2-19, 3-25, 4-55, 5-64, 6-116, 7-121, 8-137, 9-138.
Bowling Langridge 11.4-2-51-5; Williams 11-3-28-1; Kishore 13-1-37-3; Taylor 6-1-20-1.

Cycling

Vuelta a España
Leading positions: Stage 19 (Vélez-Málaga to Peñas Blancas, 205.1km): 1, E Dunbar (Ire, Pinarello-Q36.5) 5hr 54sec; 2, S Buitrago (Col, Bahrain Victorious) at 14sec behind; 3, T Gloag (GB, Pinarello-Q36.5) 23; 4, U Berrade (Sp, Equipo Kern Pharma) 44; 5, M Camprubi (Sp, Pinarello-Q36.5) 1min 44sec. **Overall** 1, E Mas (Sp, Movistar) 65:52:03; 2, P Roglic (Slove, Red Bull-BORA-hansgrohe) at 1:37; 3, S Gall (Austria, Decathlon CMA CGM) 3:01; 4, R Carapaz (Ec, EF Education-EasyPost) 5:17; 5, O Onley (Netcompany INEOS) 6:03.

Golf

DP World Tour Amgen Irish Open

Doonbeg: Leaders after two rounds (Great Britain and Ireland unless stated): **129** S Lowry 67, 62. **132** L Haotong (China) 69, 63; N Noergaard (Den) 68, 64; J Skov Olesen (Den) 68, 64. **135** R Hoejgaard (Den) 72, 63; E Ferguson 69, 66; J Niemann (Chile) 65, 70; T McKibbin 68, 67; K Kobori (NZ) 68, 67. **136** P Reed (US) 68, 68; R Neergaard-Petersen (Den) 69, 67; A Sullivan 69, 67; J Dantorp

MARTIN RICKETT/PA

came home in third, while Hodgkinson, inset, secured her place in the 800m final

# of money from GST collapse

But the chatter in Budapest has concerned how athletes are still yet to receive all that is owed to them. Sources have said that, while the athletes received 50 per cent of their money last October, the outstanding figure of between 20 and 25 per cent has not yet landed in their accounts.

In a statement to The Times, a spokesman for Johnson said: "Over the last year Michael has worked to ensure athletes who competed in GST were paid what they were owed. Against all odds, he secured funding to do just that. Athletes received half of what they were owed in October 2025.

"In May of this year GST paid the remaining funds owed to athletes into an escrow account to guarantee they would be received by athletes. GST, as per the bankruptcy plan voted on by the creditors (including the athletes), is not involved in distributing the funds to athletes. Our understanding is that distribution of payments is in process; a process controlled by Forcel0 partners under the guidelines and supervision of the bankruptcy court. Michael understands the significant interest in this situation and chose the bankruptcy process specifically for its transparency."

The fact is, these are significant sums of money for athletes and questions remain over why athletes were not made aware of the financial problems before competing in the second and third meetings and before the fourth, in Los Angeles, was cancelled.

STU FORSTER/GETTY IMAGES

Promotion party Members of the Durham team, left to right, Alex Lees, Mayank Agarwal, Duanne Olivier, Ollie Robinson, Ben McKinney, Shafiqullah Ghafari and Brydon Carse, celebrate their 93-run win over Middlesex at Chester-le-Street which earned promotion back to the First Division. Carse, left out of the England team for the Test series against Pakistan, took four wickets in Middlesex's second innings, including the final one of Naavya Sharma, as the visiting side were bowled out for 330.

Notts hold nerve to stay in hunt for title

Notts v Hampshire

Trent Bridge (final day of four): Nottinghamshire (22pts) beat Hampshire (4) by 54 runs

Division One

Paul Edwards

It is as you were in the battle for the County Championship.

At 12.35pm at a high-clouded Trent Bridge, Hampshire's last man Manny Lumsden, having proved over the previous 88 minutes that he is not a No 11, drove Fraser Sheat low to Ben Martindale, Nottinghamshire's substitute fielder, at backward point. Martindale scooped up the catch, hurled the ball heavenwards and was quickly engulfed by his team mates.

Lumsden's dismissal for 21 ended his side's innings on 123. It sealed Nottinghamshire's 54-run victory and means that all three teams at the top of Division One are still covered by five points with two matches left to play.

But Haseeb Hameed's team were made to fight far harder for their victory than had seemed likely early in the day. Resuming on 61 for six and still 117 runs short of their target, Hampshire lost three wickets inside 40 minutes, all of them in ten balls from Olly Stone, who finished with six for 28, his third haul of at least five wickets in four matches.

At that stage, it seemed likely the game would end before they stopped selling breakfast cobs in Cricketers' Suite. But the lunchtime fish and chips had been put out when Scott Currie and Lumsden's 43-run partnership for the tenth-wicket ended.

This result leaves Hampshire bottom of Division One and 32 points shy of safety. There is a possibility that ninth-placed Leicestershire, their opponents at Grace Road next week, will receive a points deduction for the state of their pitch in the game against Glamorgan but Hampshire's relegation might still be confirmed by the time they host Sussex in the final week of the season.

By contrast, Hameed's players will travel to Hove next week with their chances of retaining their title very much alive. They've been in this situation before and they know what it takes to win the Championship. The premier red-ball competition in the world is set for an exciting climax.

How they stand

Division One	P	W	L	D	Bat	Bwl	Pts
Somerset	12	6	2	4	25	36	189
Notts	12	5	1	6	24	33	185
Warks	12	5	1	6	21	35	184
Sussex	12	5	3	4	24	30	154
Yorkshire	12	4	4	4	16	30	142
Surrey	12	2	3	7	20	29	137
Glamorgan	12	3	5	4	14	33	127
Essex	12	4	6	2	13	31	124
Leics	12	2	6	4	20	32	116
Hampshire	12	2	7	3	4	32	92

Remaining fixtures (10.30): **Tuesday-Friday: Chelmsford** Essex v Warwickshire. **Leicester** Leicestershire v Hampshire. **Kia Oval** Surrey v Glamorgan. **Hove** Sussex v Nottinghamshire. **Headingley** Yorkshire v Somerset. **Sept 24-27: Sophia Gardens** Glamorgan v Essex. **Utilita Bowl** Hampshire v Sussex. **Trent Bridge** Nottinghamshire v Yorkshire. **Taunton** Somerset v Surrey. **Edgbaston** Warwickshire v Leicestershire.

Division Two	P	W	L	D	Bat	Bwl	Pts
Durham (c)	12	9	0	3	28	34	230
Northants	12	5	3	4	29	34	175
Kent	12	6	2	4	19	31	173
Middlesex	12	4	5	3	13	34	135
Derbyshire	12	4	6	2	24	31	135
Worcs	12	4	5	3	15	32	133
Lancashire	12	2	7	3	10	34	100
Glouc s	12	3	9	0	6	30	82

Remaining fixtures (10.30): **Tuesday-Friday Chester-le-Street** Durham v Worcestershire. **Bristol** Gloucestershire v Middlesex. **Canterbury** Kent v Lancashire. **Northampton** Northamptonshire v Derbyshire. **Sept 24-27: Canterbury** Kent v Gloucestershire. **Old Trafford** Lancashire v Durham. **Lord's** Middlesex v Northamptonshire. **Worcester** Worcestershire v Derbyshire.

(Swe) 69, 67. **137** J Rahm (Sp) 70, 67; R MacIntyre 72, 65; C Hill 70, 67; R Fisher 70, 67; D Law 68, 69; R Paratore (It) 68, 69. **138** D Rodrigues (Por) 69, 69; N Kimsey 71, 67; M Steinlechner (Austria) 66, 72; R McIlroy 69, 69; P Waring 70, 68; B Wiesberger (Austria) 71, 67; C Syme 68, 70; A Meronk (Pol) 68, 70; D Hillier (NZ) 69, 69; R Langasque (Fr) 68, 70; U Coussaud (Fr) 72, 66; F Capan (US) 71, 67.

Snooker

BetVictor English Open

Brentwood: Quarter-finals (best-of-11 frames): D Junhui (China) bt K Wilson (Eng) 6-2; A Carter (Eng) bt Z Yuelong (China) 6-5.

Tennis

US Open

Flushing Meadows (seeds in brackets): **Men: Singles: Quarter-final** (1) A Zverev (Ger) bt B Van De Zandschulp (Neth) 6-2, 7-5, 6-1. **Women: Singles: Semi-finals** (1) A Sabalenka (Bela) bt (3) J Pegula (US) 7-5, 6-2; (2) E Rybakina (Kaz) bt (4) C Gauff (US) 3-6, 6-4, 6-4. **Doubles: Final** (1) T Townsend (US) and K Siniakova (Cz) bt R Montgomery (US) and A Krueger (US) 5-7, 6-0, 6-2.

FIXTURES

Today

Football

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Premier League Aston Villa v Nottingham Forest; Bournemouth v Brentford; Chelsea v Hull; Crystal Palace v Ipswich; Liverpool v Fulham; Sunderland v Arsenal (8.0); Tottenham v Everton (5.30).

Sky Bet Championship Blackburn v Millwall; Bolton v Cardiff (12.30); Charlton v Portsmouth; Derby v Birmingham (12.30); Middlesbrough v Norwich; Preston v Lincoln City; Southampton v Bristol City; Swansea v Burnley; Watford v Stoke; West Bromwich v Queens Park Rangers (12.30). **League One** AFC Wimbledon v Doncaster; Blackpool v Bromley; Cambridge Utd v Reading; Leyton Orient v Wycombe (12.30); Mansfield v Huddersfield; Milton Keynes Dons v Peterborough; Notts County v Bradford City (12.30); Oxford Utd v Burton Albion; Plymouth v Barnsley; Sheffield Wednesday v Wigan; Stockport v Leicester. **League Two** Barnet v Accrington Stanley; Colchester v Crewe; Crawley v Cheltenham (12.30); Gillingham v Tranmere; Grimsby v Bristol Rovers (12.30); Newport County v Fleetwood; Oldham v Chesterfield; Port Vale v Exeter; Rotherham v Salford; Shrewsbury v Northampton; Walsall v Rochdale; York v Swindon.

Enterprise National League Boston Utd v Wealdstone; Carlisle v Southend Utd (5.30); Eastleigh v Boreham Wood; Forest Green v Gateshead; Halifax v Hornchurch; Harrogate v Tamworth (12.30); Solihull Moors v Aldershot; Sutton Utd v Scunthorpe; Woking v Altrincham; Worthing v Barrow (12.30); Yeovil v AFC Fylde. **North** Buxton v Chester; Harborough v AFC Telford; Hebburn v Hednesford; Hereford v South Shields; King's Lynn v Chorley; Marine v Darlington; Morecambe v Brackley; Radcliffe v Oxford City; Scarborough v Merthyr Town; Spalding v Bedford; Spennymoor v Macclesfield; Worksop v Southport. **South** AFC Totton v Slough; Braintree v Maidstone; Ebbsfleet v Salisbury; Farnborough v Dover; Folkestone v Farnham; Hampton & Richmond v Chelmsford; Hemel Hempstead v Tonbridge; Horsham v Chesham; Maidenhead v Billericay; Torquay v Dorking; Truro v Walton & Hersham; Weston-super-Mare v Dagenham & Redbridge.

Women's Super League West Ham v London City (12.45).

Scottish Premier Sports Cup: Quarter-finals Kilmarnock v Aberdeen (5.45); Ross County v Hibernian.

William Hill Scottish Championship Ayr v Inverness Caledonian Thistle; Dunfermline v Queen's Park; Raith v Arbroath. **League One** Airdrieonians v Alloa; East Kilbride v Peterhead; Montrose v Cove; Queen of the South v East Fife; Ross County v Hamilton. **League Two** Annan v Elgin; Clyde v Kelty; Edinburgh City v Stirling Albion; Spartans v Forfar; Stranraer v Dumbarton.

Cricket

Third Rothesay Test: Edgbaston: Fourth day of five (11.0; 90 overs minimum): England v Pakistan

Rugby league

Betfred Super League Huddersfield Giants v Castleford Tigers (3.0).

Betfred Championship: Play-off final Newcastle Thunder v Widnes Vikings (5.0).

Betfred Women's Super League Featherstone Rovers v Huddersfield Giants (2.0); Leigh Leopards v Barrow Raiders (1.0); Leeds Rhinos v St Helens (2.0).

Rugby union

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Premiership Cup: Pool A Exeter Chiefs v Bristol Bears; Gloucester v Sale Sharks. **Pool B** Harlequins v Northampton Saints (4.45); Leicester Tigers v Newcastle Red Bulls.

Women's internationals England v Australia; Scotland v Canada (4.10).

Other sport

Snooker: Brentwood BetVictor English Open semi-finals.

Tomorrow

Football

Premier League Coventry v Brighton (2.0); Manchester Utd v Manchester City (4.30).

Sky Bet Championship Sheffield Utd v Wolverhampton (12.0).

Scottish Premier Sports Cup: Quarter-final Rangers v Celtic (12.0).

Women's Super League Arsenal v Crystal Palace (2.45); Aston Villa v Manchester City (6.30); Birmingham v Brighton (2.0); Everton v Charlton (2.0); Liverpool v Tottenham (2.0); Manchester Utd v Chelsea (12.0).

Cricket

Second T20 tour match: Beckenham England Lions v Sri Lanka (2.30).

Rugby league

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Betfred Championship: Eliminators Barrow Raiders v Sheffield Eagles; Oldham v Midlands Hurricanes. **Qualifying final** London Broncos v Doncaster.

Betfred Women's Super League York Valkyrie v Wigan Warriors (midday).

Other sport

Snooker: Brentwood BetVictor English Open final.

Sport Racing

Loughnane can take St Leger to crown breakthrough year

Rob Wright
Racing Editor

Billy Loughnane has had a breakthrough year marked by a first classic success, and he can add the Betfred St Leger (3.35) to his rapidly growing CV on board the Joseph O'Brien-trained **Enceladus** at Doncaster today.

Loughnane, 20, had a first top-flight success in Germany last year but it has been his association this season with the brilliant Bow Echo that has really elevated his profile, giving him a first classic win in the 2,000 Guineas in May. He looks to be on his way to a first jockeys' championship, with a 12-winner lead over Oisin Murphy, and Enceladus can keep his momentum going.

Bow Echo has provided three of Loughnane's four group one winners this year but the other came in the July Cup on Comanche Brave, trained by another of Aidan O'Brien's sons, Donnacha. It is interesting that the family again turn to Loughnane here, with stable jockey Dylan Browne McMonagle ruled out through injury.

Enceladus has improved markedly in winning all three starts this year, following a narrow success at Cork with a handicap at Royal Ascot before easily handling a step up to group company at Goodwood. He never looked in danger last time, idling a little in the closing stages after easily getting to the front, suggesting he has still more to give.

This stiffer test of stamina seems sure to suit, while the fitting of cheekpieces for the first time could also help Enceladus to concentrate. He can give his trainer a second win in the final classic of the season, at the expense of Derby winner Christmas Day and Pierre Bonnard, both trained by his father.

The Betfred Champagne Stakes (1.45) can go to **Rosberg**, who landed a listed race at Deauville and should have no problem with this drop in trip.

Apollo One looks the one to be on in the Betfred Portland Handicap (2.20). He is at the veteran stage now but has finished second in this race off much higher marks in the past two renewals and looked ready to take advantage when an eye-catching fourth at York.

O'Brien Sr can have better fortune with **Constitution River** in the Royal Bahrain Irish Champion Stakes (5.00) at Leopardstown. He had excuses when only third behind Item and Almaqam in last month's International at York, racing too keenly as he tracked an overly strong early pace and having nothing left in the closing stages. He had previously won both the French Derby and Eclipse in good style and can turn the tables on his York conquerors.

ROB WRIGHT'S WEEKEND GUIDE

Big-race trends
Betfred St Leger
(3.35 Doncaster)
Aidan O'Brien has trained nine winners of this classic, including the past three. Backing all of his 67 runners would have shown a heavy loss, though, and he is mob-handed again with four runners today

Repeat performance?
Spirit Mixer
(2.05 Chester)
He has won the past two renewals of this race but is now an eight-year-old and is badly out of form. Loves this track but has beaten just two of 28 rivals in his past three starts; hard to fancy

Banker or bust?
More Thunder
(2.55 Doncaster)
He was a little below-par in group one company at Deauville last time but the form of any of his previous three efforts this year would make him hard to beat at this slightly lower level. BANKER

What's in a name?
Impartiality
(3.50 Chester)
This gelding is a son of the stallion, Sergei Prokofiev, but owes his name to his dam, Fair's Fair. He won his first three starts last year but has been happy to share the glory with his fellow equines since then

Red-hot trainer
Karl Burke
The North Yorkshire handler has saddled ten winners in the past fortnight. He has 12 runners today, spread across Chester, Doncaster, Musselburgh and Leopardstown

Bet of the day
Holy See
(2.05 Chester)
A fair hurdler, he is lightly raced on the Flat and looked unlucky not to win a valuable handicap at the Galway Festival in July. Unexposed at this trip, he can go one better

Doncaster
Rob Wright

1.10 Hmas Perth
1.45 Rosberg
2.20 Apollo One
2.55 More Thunder
3.35 Enceladus (nb)
4.15 Inspired
4.48 Tawajjah

Going: good to soft, good in places
Draw: 5f-1m, high numbers best
Sky Sports Racing

1.10 British Stallion Studs EBF Maiden Stakes
(2-Y-O: £25,770: 1m str) (10 runners)

1	(4)	2	**AL JABBAR** 22 (BF) C Appleby 9-7	**B Loughnane** 61
2	(7)	0	**BELOVED COUNTRY** 15 E Dunlop 9-7	**R Havlin** 69
3	(9)	2	**BERKSHIRE REGAL** 23 A Balding 9-7	**Jason Watson** ♦89
4	(6)	5	**GAME CHARACTER** 22 H Palmer 9-7	**Rossa Ryan** 80
5	(5)	3	**HMAS PERTH** 47 (T) A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-7	**W M Lordan** 83
6	(1)		**BOMBORA** K R Burke 9-4	**C Lee** –
7	(3)		**FALCON FLY** I Mohammed & J Santos 9-4	**S De Sousa** –
8	(10)		**FINGER CROSS** Harry Charlton 9-4	**L Edmunds** –
9	(8)		**KINGSPELL** R Hannon 9-4	**S M Levey** –
10	(2)		**ROYAL QUEST** A Balding 9-4	**D Probert** –

4-1 Bombora, 5-1 Royal Quest, 11-2 Game Character, Berkshire Regal, 6-1 Al Jabbar, Hmas Perth, 10-1 Kingspell, 12-1 Finger Cross.

Rob Wright's choice: Hmas Perth looked in need of the experience when third at Galway; sure to improve **Dangers:** Berkshire Regal, Al Jabbar

1.45 Betfred Champagne Stakes
ITV
(Group II: 2-Y-O: £85,065: 7f) (6)

1	(2)	13	**BREACHER** 14 (D) W Muir & C Grassick 9-2	**L Edmunds** 101
2	(5)	1	**DESERT CASTLE** 36 (D) C Appleby 9-2	**B Loughnane** 103
3	(6)	12	**GENTLE HURRICANE** 24 A Balding 9-2	**Jason Watson** ♦104
4	(4)	411	**ROSBERG** 21 (D) K R Burke 9-2	**C Lee** 102
5	(3)	101	**SERGEI DIAGHILEV** 36 A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-2	**W M Lordan** 100
6	(1)	1422	**SILVER DOMINION** 27 (D) Oliver Cole 9-2	**T Marquand** 102

8-13 Desert Castle, 11-2 Sergei Diaghilev, Gentle Hurricane, 12-1 Rosberg, Breacher, 20-1 Silver Dominion.

Wright choice: Rosberg landed a listed race in good style over a mile at Deauville; that looks solid form and he can follow up **Danger:** Desert Castle

2.20 Betfred Portland (Heritage Handicap)
ITV
(£51,540: 5f 143yd) (22)

1	(1)	201003	**DUBAI BLING** 21 (P,D) H Palmer 4-9-12	**D Probert** 104
2	(20)	-30042	**GETREADYTORUMBLE** 49 (BF,C) J Channon 4-9-11	**T Marquand** 103
3	(8)	3-0015	**AL SHABAB STORM** 13 (T,D) M Appleby 5-9-11	**Conor Whiteley (5)** 101
4	(22)	111023	**BADRI** 13 (D) M Herrington 9-9-8	**L Edmunds** ♦106
5	(17)	053310	**AIR FORCE ONE** 21 (V) G Oldroyd 5-9-7	**C Lee** 98
6	(9)	4-0560	**THE STRIKIN VIKING** 41 (H,D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 4-9-7	**Faleh Bughanaim** 80
7	(21)	003000	**ANNAF** 21 (CD) M Appleby 7-9-6	**R Havlin** 98
8	(10)	011032	**ATOMIC FORCE** 91 (D) E Bethell 7-9-5	**C Shepherd** 98
9	(6)	040010	**TREFOR** 24 (CD) C Hills 5-9-4	**B Loughnane** 95
10	(11)	045302	**TOCA MADERA** 14 (BF,C,D) D O'Meara 5-9-4	**D Tudhope** 96
11	(18)	100060	**KING OF LIGHT** 21 (D) S C Williams 4-9-4	**S M Levey** 95
12	(4)	04-000	**SUPER SOLDIER** 85 K R Burke 3-9-4	**J Nicholls (3)** 84
13	(7)	061211	**TWILIGHT CALLS** 46 (V,CD) R Spencer 8-9-3	**S Osborne** 95
14	(12)	0-3000	**AGAINST THE WIND** 24 K Ryan 4-9-2	**K Stott** 74
15	(3)	12-000	**DESERT FALCON** 21 (V,C,D) J Camacho 6-9-2	**R Sexton** 92
16	(2)	312656	**SCHRODINGER'S CAT** 24 G Tuer 3-9-0	**Toby Moore (7)** 96
17	(5)	030004	**APOLLO ONE** 24 (D) P Charalambous & J Clutterbuck 8-8-13	**S De Sousa** 87
18	(15)	031162	**I'M NEXT** 28 T Easterby 4-8-13	**D Allan** 89
19	(16)	164131	**STATION X** 21 (CD) B Smart 4-8-12	**Jason Watson** 89
20	(19)	426021	**ETERNAL SUNSHINE** 22 (CD) J Goldie 6-8-11	**Lauren Young (5)** 89
21	(13)	605401	**ROSARIO** 14 R Teal 5-8-11	**Rossa Ryan** 88
22	(14)	-46640	**JEL PEPPER** 35 (H,D) S C Williams 3-8-11	**M Ghiani** 86

11-2 Getreadytorumble, 15-2 Eternal Sunshine, Apollo One, Twilight Calls, 8-1 Air Force One, Rosario, 12-1 Toca Madera, Desert Falcon.

Wright choice: Apollo One has finished second in this race for the past two years; now much lower in the weights **Dangers:** Rosario, Eternal Sunshine

2.55 Betfred Park Stakes
ITV
(Group II: £93,572: 7f) (8)

1	(6)	4-2245	**MORE THUNDER** 27 (D) W Haggas 5-9-6	**T Marquand** ♦119
2	(4)	2-5120	**MYAL** 63 (CD) Steph Hollinshead 5-9-6	**D Allan** 107
3	(8)	-55265	**NEVER SO BRAVE** 28 (D) A Balding 5-9-6	**D Tudhope** 109
4	(1)	401402	**QIRAT** 14 (T,D) R Beckett 5-9-6	**S De Sousa** 114
5	(2)	3023-2	**VOLTERRA** 168 (D) K Ryan 5-9-6	**K Stott** 114
6	(3)	002636	**WITNESS STAND** 28 (P,T,D) Dr R Newland 5-9-6	**M Ghiani** 115
7	(7)	-10110	**FLORA OF BERMUDA** 21 (D) A Balding 5-9-3	**C Rodriguez** 111
8	(5)	1-5400	**WISE APPROACH** 34 (P) C Appleby 3-9-2	**B Loughnane** 103

5-4 More Thunder, 5-1 Flora Of Bermuda, 6-1 Never So Brave, 13-2 Wise Approach, 7-1 Qirat, 14-1 Witness Stand, 16-1 Volterra, 33-1 Myal.

Wright choice: More Thunder usually plies his trade at the highest level; this looks a good opportunity **Dangers:** Never So Brave, Flora Of Bermuda

3.35 Betfred St Leger Stakes
ITV
(Group I: 3-Y-O: £396,970: 1m 6f 115yd) (11)

1 (8) 420060 **ACTION** 24 — **101**
A P O'Brien (Ire) (Mr M Tabor, D Smith) 9-3 — **S M Levey**
Classy juvenile but often used this year as a pacemaker

2 (2) 03-255 **ALDERMAN** 65 — **103**
R Hannon (Mrs J Wood) 9-3 — **Rossa Ryan**
Stayed on well when fifth in the Derby; below par last time

3 (5) -13123 **CHRISTMAS DAY** 24 (BF) — **♦118**
A P O'Brien (Ire) (Magnier/Tabor/Smith) 9-3 — **R P Whelan**
Beaten twice since Derby win but this longer trip will suit

4 (9) 33-111 **ENCELADUS** 44 (P) — **113**
J P O'Brien (Ire) (Flaxman Stables Ltd) 9-3 — **B Loughnane**
Group three winner at Goodwood; progressing with each run

5 (1) 41625 **GALIYAN** 24 (P) — **106**
A Balding (Rashid Al Saud) 9-3 — **D Tudhope**
Tried in cheekpieces after a poor run at York; needs more

6 (11) 1-314 **GOLDEN STORY** 85 (C) — **102**
K R Burke (Sheikh Rashid Dalmook Al Maktoum) 9-3 — **C Lee**
Below best at Ascot but bred to handle this longer trip

7 (3) 5-2212 **HATTEEN** 45 (C) — **95**
A Balding (Al Shaqab Racing) 9-3 — **Faleh Bughanaim**
Close second in a Goodwood handicap; has plenty to find

8 (7) 000011 **HIGHWAYMAN** 23 — **101**
J P O'Brien (Ire) (Mr John I Neocleous) 9-3 — **S Osborne**
Easy winner on past two starts; up in class but unexposed

9 (4) -02032 **PIERRE BONNARD** 24 — **117**
A P O'Brien (Ire) (Mrs J Magnier) 9-3 — **W M Lordan**
Good second to Maltese Cross at York; should relish this trip

10 (10) 1-264 **REBEL ROCKER** 28 — **98**
Faye Bramley (Miss Jennifer Dorey) 9-3 — **Jason Watson**
Sixth in the Derby but then struggled at Newbury

11 (6) -16552 **AMELIA EARHART** 29 — **104**
A P O'Brien (Ire) (Mrs J Magnier) 9-0 — **T Marquand**
Little impact in Oaks or Irish Oaks; difficult to fancy

7-4 Enceladus, 15-8 Christmas Day, 7-2 Pierre Bonnard, 10-1 Highwayman, 14-1 Hatteen, 20-1 Alderman, 25-1 Amelia Earhart, 33-1 Galiyan.

Wright choice: Enceladus has improved with every run this year; more to come over this longer trip **Dangers** Pierre Bonnard, Christmas Day

4.15 Pertemps Network Handicap
ITV
(£36,078: 1m str) (17)

1	(9)	0-0022	**BULLET POINT** 23 (P,D) W Haggas 5-9-12	**T Marquand** 96
2	(17)	161000	**MISTER WINSTON** 35 (D) A Balding 4-9-11	**Jason Watson** ♦103
3	(3)	443044	**EBT'S GUARD** 14 (D) W Muir & C Grassick 5-9-11	**L Edmunds** 103
4	(2)	00-020	**FIFTH COLUMN** 87 (P,D) J & T Gosden 4-9-10	**R Havlin** 102
5	(5)	-06030	**CHECKANDCHALLENGE** 23 (P,D) W Knight 7-9-8	**C Shepherd** 96
6	(13)	4662-0	**CASH** 91 (D) D M Simcock 7-9-8	**S De Sousa** 69
7	(14)	0-1310	**MEZCALA** 49 (CD) J Channon 4-9-7	**G Bass** 98
8	(15)	241031	**BLUE COURVOISIER** 22 (D) C Cox 3-9-4	**Rossa Ryan** 100
9	(4)	31-215	**RIVER KING** 86 (D) R Hannon 4-9-4	**S M Levey** 95
10	(6)	4-0003	**SCOVILLE** 28 (T,BF,D) W Haggas 4-9-4	**D Tudhope** 94
11	(10)	0-0000	**HENLEIN** 21 (P) K Ryan 5-9-3	**K Stott** 97
12	(7)	0-5142	**MOONFALL** 8 (D) G Boughey 3-9-3	**B Loughnane** 99
13	(12)	660200	**STORM STAR** 29 (BF,D) A Balding 5-9-2	**D Probert** 95
14	(1)	00-050	**AL MUBHIR** 79 (D) K Ryan 7-9-2	**T Eaves** 86
15	(16)	/5040-	**TREASURE TIME** 350 (D) J & S Quinn 5-8-11	**M Ghiani** --
16	(8)	521211	**INSPIRED** 6 (D) K R Burke 4-8-8	**J Nicholls (3)** 85
17	(11)	1-305	**PINATUBO'S LEGACY** 35 (P) T Kent 4-8-7	**S Osborne** 82

9-2 Scoville, 11-2 Moonfall, 6-1 Bullet Point, 13-2 Blue Courvoisier, 8-1 Mezcala, 10-1 Inspired, 12-1 Fifth Column, 14-1 Checkandchallenge, Ebt's Guard.

Wright choice: Inspired has a progressive profile and escapes a penalty for last week's smooth success at York **Dangers:** Moonfall, Scoville

4.48 PJ Towey Handicap
(£36,078: 1m 2f) (13)

1	(5)	-02002	**THUNDER RUN** 21 (D) K R Burke 5-9-12	**C Lee** ♦104
2	(11)	4-1100	**DAVID OF ATHENS** 63 H Al Jehani (UAE) 4-9-10	**Faleh Bughanaim** 81
3	(2)	3/212-	**OLD HARROVIAN** 512 (T,BF,D) A Balding 7-9-6	**Jason Watson** --
4	(8)	304101	**CITY OF POETS** 30 (D) J Tate 4-9-5	**Rossa Ryan** 99
5	(13)	15-330	**PATHEIN** 86 (C) E Dunlop 3-9-4	**R Havlin** 100
6	(1)	412335	**NIGHT BREEZE** 35 (BF) I Williams 6-9-4	**B Loughnane** 97
7	(6)	3-1100	**BUNYOLA BAY** 43 (C,D) R Hannon 3-9-2	**S M Levey** 102
8	(9)	0-6040	**TONY MONTANA** 14 (D) K P De Foy 6-9-1	**Toby Moore (7)** 94
9	(7)	131026	**SPORTINGSILVERMINE** 22 (D) James Owen 5-9-0	**M Ghiani** 92
10	(4)	-12401	**TOUCH THE MOON** 28 (D) W Durkan (Ire) 5-8-13	**S Osborne** 90
11	(3)	-04400	**FLYING FRONTIER** 14 (D) J Tate 6-8-12	**T Marquand** 90
12	(12)	2101-0	**PORT OF LONDON** 37 (P,BF,D) J & T Gosden 4-8-10	**T Heard** 91
13	(10)	221/21	**TAWAJJAH** 51 (D) Oli Rix 5-8-10	**J Peate** 98

9-2 Thunder Run, 6-1 Tawajjah, 13-2 City Of Poets, 15-2 Touch The Moon, Night Breeze, 10-1 Sportingsilvermine, Port Of London, Old Harrovian, Pathein.

Wright choice: Tawajjah appreciated a step up to this trip when winning at Sandown; more to come **Dangers:** City Of Poets, Touch The Moon

Chester
Rob Wright

1.30 Plage De Havre
2.05 Holy See (nap)
2.40 Night Star
3.20 This Moment
3.50 Shafdar
4.30 Zermatt Star
5.10 Dublin Bay
5.42 Haveyoumissedme

Going: good to soft, soft in places
Draw: low numbers best
Sky Sports Racing

1.30 Virgin Bet Stand Cup Stakes
ITV
(Listed: £34,026: 1m 4f) (6)

1	(4)	12-243	**DUBAI HONOUR** 28 (T,BF,D) W Haggas 8-9-5	**C Fallon** ♦108
2	(2)	03130-	**GREY CUBAN** 308 (H,C) H Palmer 5-9-5	**Oisin Orr** --
3	(3)	-02210	**MASTER VINTNER** 22 (B,D) R Beckett 4-9-5	**H Crouch** 96
4	(1)	1-6301	**PLAGE DE HAVRE** 22 (D) A Balding 5-9-5	**C Hutchinson** 106
5	(5)	-04511	**TOO SOON** 14 (P,D) G & J Moore 4-9-5	**W Fentiman** 100
6	(6)	606-66	**ULURU** 78 (D) D Menuisier 5-9-0	**J Leavy** 73

Evens Dubai Honour, 3-1 Plage De Havre, 6-1 Grey Cuban, Too Soon, 16-1 Master Vintner, 25-1 Uluru.

Wright choice: Plage De Havre showed a good attitude in a competitive handicap at York; can cope with this higher grade **Danger:** Dubai Honour

2.05 Virgin Bet Supports Safe Gambling Watergate Cup (Handicap: £51,540: 2m)
ITV
(12)

1	(8)	24/102	**HOLY SEE** 47 W Durkan (Ire) 5-9-12	**Oisin Orr** ♦95
2	(6)	200064	**STRESSFREE** 7 (C) D O'Meara 6-9-8	**M Winn** 94
3	(7)	6000-0	**TASHKHAN** 77 (C) B Ellison 8-9-7	**H Crouch** --
4	(10)	0-0051	**DANCING IN PARIS** 35 (D) I Williams 6-9-5	**C Fallon** 93
5	(12)	-30400	**SPIRIT MIXER** 35 (CD) A Balding 8-9-4	**A Redman (7)** 86
6	(5)	42-430	**GRANITE BAY** 47 (BF) J P Fahey (Ire) 5-9-3	**N M Crosse** 91
7	(2)	300200	**TRIBAL STAR** 28 (P) A McGuinness (Ire) 5-8-10	**Jamie Powell** 89
8	(4)	500533	**POLE STAR** 7 (V) C Johnston 4-8-9	**S D Bowen** 82
9	(3)	-21421	**CRANACHAN** 21 (B,CD) R Beckett 3-8-4	**N Currie** 88
10	(1)	121125	**SHIPSHAPE** 32 (P,D) B J Llewellyn & R Williams 4-8-2	**Isobelle Chalmers (7)** 75
11	(9)	024603	**GENTLE WARRIOR** 8 (V,C) K R Burke 4-8-2	**C Hardie** 71
12	(11)	241403	**DUNKELD DREAMER** 13 (P,BF) K R Burke 3-8-2	**Finlay Bassett (7)** 81

4-1 Spirit Mixer, 9-2 Cranachan, 5-1 Holy See, 6-1 Granite Bay, 10-1 Shipshape, Stressfree, Dancing In Paris, 12-1 Pole Star.

Wright choice: Holy See looked unlucky when a fast-finishing second in a big-field handicap at the Galway Festival **Dangers:** Cranachan, Pole Star

2.40 British Stallion Studs EBF Restricted Maiden Stakes
(2-Y-O: £15,462: 7f) (8)

1	(1)		**GREEN STAR** G Boughey 9-7	**Grace McEntee** --
2	(5)	62	**NATIONAL PRIDE** 39 (BF) W Haggas 9-7	**C Fallon** 80
3	(4)	00	**HIRAM BINGHAM** 17 M Bell 9-5	**H Crouch** --
4	(8)	5332	**NIGHT STAR** 9 (BF) R Hannon 9-5	**J Leavy** ♦82
5	(3)	20	**REGENCY ROYAL** 42 A Balding 9-5	**C Hutchinson** 77
6	(6)	0	**DARK DETECTIVE** 25 O Greenall & J Guerriero 9-2	**H Russell** --
7	(7)		**POPPULAR** T Easterby 8-13	**D Fentiman** --
8	(2)	0	**TIDAL FORCE** 9 H Palmer 8-13	**Oisin Orr** 44

6-5 Night Star, 3-1 National Pride, 4-1 Regency Royal, 11-2 Green Star, 25-1 others.

3.20 H.R. Owen Lotus Manchester Nursery
(2-Y-O: £10,308: 5f) (10)

1	(1)	242411	**THIS MOMENT** 7 (D) G Boughey 9-9	**Grace McEntee** ♦89
2	(9)	110	**QUILLAN** 23 (D) D & N Barron 9-8	**Oisin Orr** 87
3	(10)	10500	**UNDERDOG** 24 (D) R Spencer 9-2	**C Hutchinson** 87
4	(2)	140	**PEACEFUL WARRIOR** 24 K Ryan 9-2	**Shane Gray** 84
5	(4)	3140	**TOWELONTHETERRACE** 24 (C) J Candlish 9-1	**H Crouch** 83
6	(6)	1022	**ROTELLE** 15 (P,D) C Fellowes 9-0	**Kaiya Fraser** 80
7	(7)	551103	**PAPER VIEW** 26 R Hannon 9-0	**J Leavy** 78
8	(5)	231061	**MAY BEE IN PROFIT** 11 (D) T Easterby 8-9	**D Fentiman** 76
9	(8)	3443	**DEPUTY VICE** 9 (T) R Menzies 8-8	**C Hardie** 74
10	(3)	4651	**NAVAL COP** 12 (D) A Balding 8-2	**Isobelle Chalmers (7)** 65

3-1 This Moment, 4-1 Rotelle, 5-1 Paper View, 6-1 Quillan, 8-1 Underdog, 10-1 others.

3.50 Virgin Bet Every Saturday Money Back Handicap
(£15,462: 1m 2f) (11)

1	(11)	010620	**SPIORADALTA** 22 (CD) M Walford 6-9-10	**H Russell** ♦91
2	(3)	1022-6	**BOX TO BOX** 30 (V,CD) H Palmer 7-9-7	**Oisin Orr** 86
3	(8)	014	**PURPLE MOON** 38 (D) G Baker 4-9-7	**B Sayette** 83
4	(6)	200020	**SUJET** 21 D Carroll 4-9-7	**Z Wheatley** 89
5	(9)	05-134	**WISPER** 43 (D) A King 8-9-6	**H Crouch** 89
6	(1)	-00222	**IMPARTIALITY** 13 (P,C) Phillip Makin 4-9-5	**Shane Gray** 86
7	(4)	321123	**STAR CAST** 9 (CD) G Tutty 4-8-13	**Kaiya Fraser** 80
8	(10)	252423	**MANO CHICAGO** 33 (V) I Jardine 4-8-11	**M Winn** 82
9	(7)	334651	**QITAAL** 9 (V,CD) C Johnston 7-8-9	**S D Bowen** 76
10	(5)	232030	**NO MORE PORTER** 10 (T,V) A McGuinness (Ire) 8-8-5	**Jamie Powell** 76
11				

4-1 Impartiality, 9-2 Shafdar, 5-1 Qitaal, 7-1 Star Cast, Mano Chicago, 8-1 others.

4.30 Lee Martin 60th Birthday Celebration Handicap
(Div I: £7,731: 1m) (10)

1	(9)	113504	**BEST RATE** 8 (D) R Hannon 4-10-3	**S C Cronin (5)** ♦88
2	(8)	000500	**WALSINGHAM** 13 (D) D O'Meara 6-9-11	**M Winn** 84
3	(1)	022000	**HOT CASH** 13 (P,D) J Channon 4-9-9	**C Fallon** 87
4	(4)	-02035	**VIXEY** 21 (CD) S G West 6-9-7	**A Brookes** 79
5	(10)	2212-4	**TELE RED** 13 (D) K R Burke 9-9-5	**Shane Gray** 73
6	(3)	612-00	**RASCAL RECKNELL** 60 (P) M Appleby 5-9-4	**Oisin Orr** 71
7	(6)	312304	**VIDMYR** 42 J Candlish 3-9-3	**H Crouch** 81
8	(5)	545-64	**BE FRANK** 6 I Williams 6-9-1	**C Hutchinson** 62
9	(2)	004012	**ZERMATT STAR** 3 (P,D) T Coyle & K Wood 3-8-12	**C Hardie** 74
10	(7)	230010	**GIANT** 4 (D) I Williams 6-8-9	**S D Bowen** 63

7-2 Zermatt Star, 4-1 Tele Red, 5-1 Vixey, 6-1 Be Frank, 13-2 Best Rate, 10-1 others.

5.10 Lee Martin 60th Birthday Celebration Handicap
(Div II: £7731: 1m) (9)

1	(4)	411005	**PRIAPOS** 13 (P,D) Phillip Makin 4-9-12	**Shane Gray** ♦86
2	(7)	-41513	**DUBLIN BAY** 16 (P) Ollie Sangster 3-9-9	**R P Downey** 79
3	(9)	3-1130	**EAGLE BAY** 36 (BF,CD) H Bethell 3-9-9	**S D Bowen** 85
4	(8)	001532	**MIDNIGHT STRIKE** 7 (P,T,D) J Candlish 4-9-7	**H Crouch** 80
5	(6)	300131	**GANODIN** 81 I Williams 3-9-5	**C Fallon** 73
6	(5)	525110	**CRAZEE ICON** 46 (CD) A Balding 3-9-4	**C Hutchinson** 80
7	(2)	433024	**THE RESDEV SCHOLAR** 19 M & D Easterby 3-9-1	**Joanna Mason** 83
8	(3)	06-030	**KINDEST NATION** 7 (V,C) H Palmer 5-8-13	**Oisin Orr** 72
9	(1)	643503	**APACHE OUTLAW** 42 (P,T) A McGuinness (Ire) 6-8-11	**Jamie Powell** 73

4-1 Apache Outlaw, 9-2 Midnight Strike, 5-1 Ganodin, The Resdev Scholar, 6-1 others.

5.42 John Smith's Jump Jockeys Challenge Handicap (Professional Jump Jockeys)
(£7,731: 1m 4f) (11)

1	(8)	-50000	**BRAVAIS** 35 (P) I Williams 6-11-7	**C J Todd** 75
2	(11)	1222-1	**LOKI** 117 (T) O Greenall & J Guerriero 4-11-5	**T Wynne** 80
3	(10)	34/1-0	**MICK COLLINS** 49 (D) M Todhunter 5-11-3	**R Mania** 85
4	(5)	561105	**DAMASCUS STEEL** 12 (P,D) Gihan Arnolda 6-11-3	**B Hughes** 79
5	(4)	0-6050	**KIND OF KISS** 13 (T) S England 5-11-2	**J England** 72
6	(7)	1-4364	**KUREDU KING** 21 (P,D) D McCain 4-11-1	**T Gillard** 77
7	(3)	152-12	**NIBRAS GOLD** 37 (P,T,CD) James Owen 8-11-1	**J J Burke** 76
8	(2)	5353-6	**SIGLIOSA** 26 Dan Horsford 4-10-13	**B J Powell** ♦87
9	(6)	520324	**HAVEYOUMISSEDME** 49 (CD) I Jardine 8-10-13	**D McMenamin** 79
10	(9)	13-526	**SPARTAN TIMES** 63 J Candlish 5-10-11	**Sean Quinlan** 72
11	(1)	-06223	**ARRANGE** 36 (P,D) M Todhunter 8-10-7	**C Bewley** 68

3-1 Loki, 7-2 Nibras Gold, 9-2 Arrange, 13-2 Haveyoumissedme, 10-1 Spartan Times, 12-1 others.

Leopardstown - selected
Rob Wright

3.55 Blue Bolt
5.00 Constitution River

Going: good
Draw: no advantage
Racing TV

3.55 Coolmore America 'Justify' Matron Stakes
ITV
(Group I: Fillies and mares: £240,000: 1m) (9)

1	(9)	2-1111	**BLUE BOLT** 41 (D) A Balding (UK) 4-9-7	**C T Keane** ♦119
2	(7)	402602	**CAROLINA JETSTREAM** 22 (D) Robson Aquiar 4-9-7	**David Egan** 104
3	(3)	15-111	**CITY OF MEMPHIS** 111 (C,D) P Twomey 4-9-7	**W J Lee** 107
4	(4)	-01515	**DUCKADILLY** 55 (C,D) Daniel McLoughlin 5-9-7	**B M Coen** 100
5	(8)	110-43	**FALLEN ANGEL** 35 (P,BF,CD) K R Burke (UK) 5-9-7	**James Doyle** 101
6	(6)	111126	**MERIDEN** 14 (C,D) D Hogan 3-9-2	**J M Sheridan** 103
7	(2)	-30410	**PIVOTAL ATTACK** 14 Joseph G Murphy 3-9-2	**O Murphy** 103
8	(1)	011223	**PRECISE** 27 (BF,D) A P O'Brien 3-9-2	**R L Moore** 118
9	(5)	112325	**TRUE LOVE** 34 (BF,C,D) A P O'Brien 3-9-2	**P C Boudot** 116

11-8 Blue Bolt, 7-4 Precise, 7-1 True Love, 8-1 City Of Memphis, 10-1 Fallen Angel, 50-1 Duckadilly, Pivotal Attack, Meriden, 66-1 Carolina Jetstream.

Wright choice: Blue Bolt has been a revelation this season, winning at this level on her past two starts; can strike again **Dangers:** Precise, True Love

5.00 Royal Bahrain Irish Champion Stakes
(Group I: £725,001: 1m 2f) (8)

1	(8)	33-142	**ALMAQAM** 24 (D) E Walker (UK) 5-9-9	**Kieran Shoemark** 125
2	(1)	40-031	**HOTAZHELL** 48 (P,C,D) J Harrington 4-9-9	**S Foley** 114
3	(6)	-13054	**LAMBOURN** 49 (D) A P O'Brien 4-9-9	**D McDonogh** 116
4	(7)	0-5231	**WIMBLEDON HAWKEYE** 28 (D) G Scott (UK) 4-9-9	**C Soumillon** 114
5	(2)	2-3421	**A BOY NAMED SUSIE** 27 (D) Donnacha O'Brien 3-9-3	**O Murphy** 118
6	(3)	1-1113	**CONSTITUTION RIVER** 24 (D) A P O'Brien 3-9-3	**R L Moore** 124
7	(5)	1-1236	**HAWK MOUNTAIN** 24 A P O'Brien 3-9-3	**P C Boudot** 118
8	(4)	1-1011	**ITEM** 24 (D) A Balding (UK) 3-9-3	**C T Keane** ♦126

6-4 Constitution River, 9-4 Item, 4-1 Almaqam, 8-1 A Boy Named Susie, 16-1 Wimbledon Hawkeye, 25-1 Hawk Mountain, Hotazhell, 50-1 Lambourn.

Wright choice: Constitution River had excuses when third to Item in the International Stakes at York; can bounce back **Dangers:** Item, Almaqam

Lowry shoots record 62 as McIlroy toils at Irish Open

Golf

Shane Lowry said he had "real fun out there" after shooting a course-record 62 for a three-shot lead at the Amgen Irish Open as Ryder Cup colleague Rory McIlroy struggled with his putter.

Lowry fired nine birdies at the par-70 Trump International Golf Links and Hotel in Doonbeg to reach 11-under and hold a three-shot lead as he walked off the final hole.

It was a welcome return to form for the Irishman, who has had a disappointing season and not managed a top-20 finish since a runners-up spot at the Cognizant Classic in February.

He told Sky Sports: "It was real fun out there. I got off to a nice start and kept my foot on the gas, tried to keep hitting good shots and keep holing putts.

"The crowds were amazing out there. They support me and it was nice to give them something to shout about."

Defending champion McIlroy, by contrast, failed to find momentum in his one-under 69 and three-putted the par-four 18th from little distance to trail Lowry by nine shots.

The defending champion and two-times winner of his home event hoped he could march through the field after a stunning eagle at the par-five 8th, McIlroy sending his second shot from 268 yards stone dead.

McIlroy had picked up an early birdie at the second but the six-times major champion gave the shot back at the short seventh after finding a greenside bunker.

The brilliant eagle got him back under par for the day but McIlroy did not take advantage of the par-five 10th after being seemingly disturbed by a camera shutter in his backswing and sending his approach shot off target.

McIlroy then failed to get up an down on the 11th and, although he found a birdie at the 17th, he was punished at the last by some careless work on the green.

"The course was certainly gettable and there were some pretty low scores out there," McIlroy said.

"I felt like I hit it well enough to shoot a low one but I just couldn't get the putter going at all.

"The last two days the greens have confused me a little bit and I've been struggling to read them. But hopefully I can turn it around tomorrow and try to get myself back in it."

Lowry, who won this tournament in 2009 as a 22-year-old amateur, was playing right behind McIlroy and the galleries grew following birdies on three, four and five.

He drained a long-range putt at seven, and birdied eight and nine to reach the turn in only 30, his best outward nine in 65 rounds at the Irish Open.

Further birdies at 11 and 12 put Lowry on "59 watch", but he bogeyed the 13th before a final birdie at 15.

China's Haotong Li shot a 63, with seven birdies and an eagle, to lie second on eight-under alongside Danish pair Jacob Skov Olesen and Niklas Norgaard, who each shot 64.

Scotland's Ewen Ferguson and Northern Ireland's Tom McKibbin are tied in fifth after respective rounds of 66 and 67, alongside another Dane, Rasmus Hojgaard, who shot into contention with a superb 63.

Patrick Reed and two-time winner Jon Rahm remain in contention on four under and three under after shooting 68 and 67 respectively.

Bath

Rob Wright

1.20 Arundel **3.45** Make A Splash
1.55 Colonnade **4.20** Some Nightmare
2.30 Baarberini **5.05** Grand Vista
3.08 Knock Three Times **5.37** Who Is Alice

Going: good
Draw: no advantage
Sky Sports Racing

1.20 Handicap (£3,576: 1m 4f) (9)

1 (5) 245-3 **ARUNDEL** 13 E Dunlop 4-11-2 **H Callan**
2 (1) 66230 **GREY FOX** 15 (T) E Lavelle 9-11-0 **K Wood (7)**
3 (9) 63433 **REVICH** 16 (V) A Wintle 10-10-8 **Miss G King (5)**
4 (7) 00505 **THREE YORKSHIREMEN** 12 (D) Jack Jones 6-10-6 **Miss M Boucher**
5 (3) 46660 **SHAHBAZ** 9 (D) A Watson 6-10-6 **Miss B Hampson**
6 (4) -0530 **COGITAL** 22 (P,CD) B J Llewellyn & R Williams 11-10-1 **Miss Ja Llewellyn (5)**
7 (2) 43232 **STINTINO SUNSET** 20 (H) J & S Birkett 6-10-0 **R Birkett**
8 (8) 65455 **THE PUG** 11 (V) O Murphy 6-9-11 **J Myers (7)**
9 (6) 06/0- **APPLEJACK POET** J3 (P) B J Murphy (Ire) 9-9-11 **Miss I Mathias (3)**

9-4 Stintino Sunset, 3-1 Arundel, 11-2 The Pug, 7-1 Three Yorkshiremen, 8-1 Revich, 10-1 Grey Fox, 16-1 Shahbaz, 20-1 Cogital, 25-1 Applejack Poet.

1.55 Novice Stakes (£6,480: 1m 2f) (6)

1 (6) 04 **NO ORDINARY JOE** 10 R Stephens 10-9-10 **D E Hogan**
2 (1) **SOUL OF APPIN** B Meehan 4-9-5 **J Callan**
3 (4) 353 **COLONNADE** 16 (T) S & E Crisford 3-9-4 **J Mitchell**
4 (2) 22 **DIALSTONE** 38 (BF) R Beckett 3-9-4 **R Clutterbuck**
5 (5) 0 **INDIAN MARY** 44 K P De Foy 3-8-13 **Laura Pearson**
6 (3) 2364 **MATHOURA** 14 J Tickle 3-8-13 **M Paetel (3)**

Evens Dialstone, 2-1 Colonnade, 7-1 Soul Of Appin, 8-1 Mathoura, 33-1 No Ordinary Joe, Indian Mary.

2.30 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 1m) (14)

1 (4) 3 **ABLE TASMAN** 105 A Watson 9-7 **J Mitchell**
2 (7) 32 **BAARBERINI** 37 (BF) James Horton 9-7 **D Muscutt**
3 (3) 54 **BISCAYSJAN** 19 M Bell 9-7 **J Callan**
4 (13) 53 **CRACKING IDEA** 41 E Dunlop 9-7 **M Paetel (3)**
5 (5) 0 **DEIRA MOON** 61 Harry Eustace 9-7 **G Downing**
6 (9) 63 **MULVANEY'S RETURN** 9 B Meehan 9-7 **L Wright (3)**
7 (10) 5 **THE SERGEON** 19 Oliver Cole 9-7 **J Dace (5)**
8 (6) 0 **YABREEN** 17 J Channon 9-7 **F Marsh**
9 (14) 00 **GRETA TINTIN** 14 A Balding 9-2 **W Carver**
10 (8) **NASEEBWALI** Michael Keady 9-2 **D E Hogan**
11 (12) 03 **ORCHARD HATCHES** 30 M Tregoning 9-2 **R Clutterbuck**
12 (11) **TRISPEN** Owen Burrows 9-2 **S Donohoe**
13 (1) 0 **BOOMSHAKALAK** 66 Zoe Hawkins 8-13 **K O'Neill**
14 (2) 0 **STARLIGHT BAY** 14 M Tregoning 8-13 **J Doughty**

2-1 Baarberini, 4-1 Biscaysian, 7-1 Cracking Idea, 8-1 Trispen, The Sergeon, 12-1 Yabreen, Orchard Hatches, 14-1 Able Tasman.

3.08 Nursery (2-Y-O: £4,397: 5f) (10)

1 (8) 213 **AMBER OCEAN** 45 (D) Dr R Newland 9-9 **J Doughty**
2 (6) 22415 **KNOCK THREE TIMES** 42 J Osborne 9-8 **W Carver**
3 (7) 05310 **SOUTH WEST** 30 (B,BF,D) R Hughes 9-8 **F Marsh**
4 (4) 22125 **DOWMAN** 14 (T,BF,D) G Boughey 9-7 **J Callan**
5 (10) 05311 **PJ'S CORNER** 14 (D) D Cunha 9-7 **S Donohoe**
6 (2) 34402 **PERIGORD NOIR** 14 (P) G Baker 9-5 **J Dace (5)**
7 (5) 4021 **BIRKACRE BROW** 23 (D) J Tate 9-5 **J Mitchell**
8 (9) 551 **SPACE DREAMER** 20 (D) Ollie Sangster 9-5 **H Vigors (5)**
9 (1) 45465 **JAZZ QUEEN** 21 H Palmer 9-2 **L Wright (3)**
10 (3) 6651 **PENNY CAPRI** 66 (H,D) D Loughnane 9-1 **D Muscutt**

4-1 PJ's Corner, 5-1 Perigord Noir, 11-2 Space Dreamer, 6-1 Amber Ocean, 7-1 Birkacre Brow, 8-1 Penny Capri, 10-1 South West, Dowman.

3.45 Handicap (£3,768: 2m 1f) (12)

1 (5) 66-00 **CHILLHI** J7 (T,V) B J Murphy (Ire) 6-9-12 **M Paetel (3)**
2 (2) -0231 **FRAM CASTLE** 10 (V,C) M Wigham 5-9-12 **A Egan (7)**
3 (4) 42335 **SHIVANN** 16 (B,T,D) I Williams 6-9-11 **J Callan**
4 (3) 44464 **FORNIDO** 26 M Attwater 4-9-4 **K Fox**
5 (8) -2335 **LA TRINITE** 11 N King 4-9-4 **F Marsh**
6 (9) 5-064 **CHERRY COLA** 10 (P,C) Miss S West 10-9-3 **Rose Dawes (5)**
7 (1) 54004 **CLOUDY ROSE** 14 J Berry 8-9-2 **L Wright (3)**
8 (7) 0-500 **SMITH** 68 (V) Mrs L Richards 10-9-2 **J Dace (5)**
9 (10) 60560 **TURTON** 21 (B) A Carroll 3-8-9 **J Doughty**
10 (12) 06003 **MAKE A SPLASH** 16 (V) T Ward 3-8-8 **K O'Neill**
11 (11) 50650 **LADY LAUREN** 10 E De Giles 3-8-6 **O Tubb (5)**
12 (6) 60060 **N'ION** 17 (V) I Williams 3-8-6 **W Cox**

3-1 Fram Castle, 5-1 Make A Splash, La Trinite, 11-2 Simiyann, 6-1 Cloudy Rose, 8-1 Cherry Cola, 12-1 Fornido, 20-1 Chillhi.

4.20 Handicap (£3,768: 6f) (8)

1 (5) 5-055 **TRAFALGER** 19 (P,T) B Case 5-9-9 **J Mitchell**
2 (6) 362-4 **ALSHIMALI** 17 (H) A Carroll 5-9-7 **Josephine Gordon**
3 (3) 12662 **BE AN ANGEL** 19 (B,D) B Millman 4-9-5 **D Muscutt**
4 (2) 55640 **MAY ENCOUNTER** 30 (H) H Candy 4-9-2 **J Callan**
5 (8) -05F0 **TEN CLUB** 10 (H,D) A Wintle 5-9-1 **F Marsh**
6 (1) 05251 **MACARONE** 16 (D) G Harris 5-9-0 **B Ffrench-Davis (5)**
7 (4) 30322 **SOME NIGHTMARE** 12 (P,D) J G O'Shea 9-8-12 **A Egan (7)**
8 (7) 06645 **ROCK MASTER** 11 A Carroll 4-8-9 **Myla Coppins (5)**

11-4 Some Nightmare, 3-1 Be An Angel, 11-2 Macarone, 6-1 May Encounter, 8-1 Alshimali, Trafalger, 14-1 Rock Master, 16-1 Ten Club.

5.05 Handicap (Div I: £3,768: 1m) (14)

1 (10) 11331 **SHES GOT THE BLUES** 11 (D) A Carroll 3-9-11 **Rose Dawes (5)**
2 (9) 25546 **NAMMOS** 12 (P,CD) J & R Flint 6-9-7 **M Paetel (3)**
3 (7) 00003 **GREEN ICON** 22 (P) J & R Flint 4-9-6 **Millie Wonnacott (5)**
4 (14) 33401 **A ROSE ADAAY** 12 (P) G Harris 4-9-4 **B Ffrench-Davis (5)**
5 (4) 04136 **ANGEL'S CALL** 12 (P) Mrs N Evans 5-9-4 **K O'Neill**
6 (8) 62466 **RAVENGLASS** 22 (P,D) A Wintle 7-9-3 **J Callan**
7 (6) 30360 **GRAND VISTA** 17 W Muir & C Grassick 3-9-2 **D Muscutt**
8 (5) 06635 **HOPJES** J14 (B,T) H Dickin 7-9-1 **Doubtful**
9 (2) 1001- **THE ORMER GATHERER** 456 Faye Bramley 7-9-1 **W Cox**
10 (13) -0006 **MEDYG** 22 (B,BF) E Smyth-Osbourne 3-9-1 **Georgia Dobie**
11 (3) 40445 **OH SO AUDACIOUS** 11 (P,D) Jack Jones 7-9-0 **J Mitchell**
12 (12) -0554 **NEAT AND TIDY** 19 R Hughes 3-8-13 **F Marsh**
13 (11) 43542 **ARVANA BELLE** 22 B Millman 3-8-10 **J Doughty**
14 (11) 000 **VICTORIAN ROSE** 69 M Murphy 3-8-9 **D E Hogan**

11-4 Shes Got The Blues, 4-1 A Rose Adaay, 8-1 Arvana Belle, 10-1 Medyg, Nammos, 12-1 Angel's Call, The Ormer Gatherer, Oh So Audacious.

5.37 Handicap (Div II: £3,768: 1m) (14)

1 (9) 31120 **DESERT CHARM** 34 (BF,D) M Murphy 4-9-9 **D Muscutt**
2 (7) 26206 **AMARACHI** 30 (P) J Parr 4-9-7 **J Mitchell**
3 (8) -6433 **TYPEFACE** 52 (P,T,D) I Williams 4-9-4 **J Callan**
4 (2) 64530 **THAI PRINCESS** 15 (T) A Wintle 3-9-4 **F Marsh**
5 (6) 06553 **WHO IS ALICE** 10 (H) G Harris 3-9-4 **H Vigors (5)**
6 (3) 60040 **QUITE SWEET** 11 (D) A Carroll 4-9-3 **Josephine Gordon**
7 (5) 01320 **FREEDOM BAY** 16 (P,T,CD) Zoe Hawkins 4-9-2 **K O'Neill**
8 (10) 63635 **EYE OF THE WATER** 12 (P,CD) R Harris 10-9-1 **R Clutterbuck**
9 (1) -0650 **RIVAL** 31 (B,D) J & R Flint 8-9-1 **Millie Wonnacott (5)**
10 (12) 00030 **COILED** 2 M Rimell 4-9-1 **J Dace (5)**
11 (13) 40205 **MOORETOWN LAD** 46 A Wintle 6-9-0 **Laura Coughlan (3)**
12 (4) -4620 **GIRLS ALLOWED** 19 J & S Birkett 3-8-12 **D E Hogan**
13 (11) 6-060 **LADY V** 12 Charlie Pike 3-8-11 **K Fox**
14 (14) 00-05 **SAVVI ROW** 212 B Millman 3-8-9 **J Doughty**

9-2 Typeface, 5-1 Desert Charm, 6-1 Amarachi, 7-1 Who Is Alice, Freedom Bay, 8-1 Eye Of The Water, 12-1 Mooretown Lad, 14-1 Girls Allowed.

Lingfield Park

Rob Wright

1.38 Affettuoso **4.35** Tie Fighter
2.13 Pace Attack **5.15** Royal County Glory
2.49 Berning Hot **5.47** Espanita
3.23 Yazoo **6.17** Mart
4.00 Our Cody

Going: standard
Draw: no advantage **Sky Sports Racing**

1.38 Novice Stakes (£6,480: 1m 4f) (5)

1 (1) **ONEINTHEWELL** J24 James Owen 5-9-12 **C Howarth (3)**
2 (5) 250-0 **LOST IN WONDER** 131 C Poulton 4-9-7 **A Rawlinson**
3 (2) 52-5 **AFFETTUOSO** 95 R Varian 3-9-4 **R Dawson**
4 (4) 03 **ASTRID** 25 James Horton 3-8-13 **C Beasley**
5 (3) 0 **ELECTRIC ARC** 138 G Boughey 3-8-13 **P Cosgrave**

8-11 Affettuoso, 5-2 Astrid, 10-1 Lost In Wonder, Oneinthewell, 16-1 Electric Arc.

2.13 Handicap (£4,397: 1m 4f) (10)

1 (8) 456 **BANKATARY** 24 (BF) James Owen 4-10-2 **G Wood**
2 (3) 354-0 **WISE COUNSELLOR** J15 (P) G & J Moore 4-9-10 **T P Queally**
3 (6) 3-622 **JAMES CHOICE** 26 (BF) W Greatrex 3-9-9 **E Greatrex**
4 (10) -3122 **HEBRIDEAN NOMAD** 21 (CD) A Balding 5-9-9 **C Tucker (7)**
5 (4) 11346 **AFFECTION** 17 (D) D Pipe 3-9-9 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
6 (1) 16550 **CAPTAIN FOX** 24 (C) R Hughes 3-9-7 **D J Murphy (5)**
7 (2) 26416 **ROSSA RAHEEN** 30 (D) Ollie Sangster 3-9-7 **C Bishop**
8 (7) 06041 **PACE ATTACK** 12 (P) Sir M Prescott 3-9-5 **L Morris**
9 (9) 2560 **WHITE STORM** 25 (V) S & E Crisford 3-9-4 **H Davies**
10 (5) 546-4 **ZARCO** 51 (BF) Harry Eustace 3-9-0 **P Cosgrave**

13-8 James Choice, 7-2 Pace Attack, 5-1 Hebridean Nomad, 8-1 Bankatary, 10-1 Zarco, Rossa Raheen, 20-1 Captain Fox, 25-1 others.

2.49 Handicap (£3,768: 1m) (9)

1 (2) 26051 **BERNING HOT** 19 M Attwater 4-9-9 **A Rawlinson**
2 (5) 5-514 **MOUNT MOGAN** 44 (P,C) Mrs L Mongan 9-9-8 **L Morris**
3 (8) -0106 **BORDERLINE MADNESS** 28 (P,CD) W Stone 4-9-8 **R Dawson**
4 (7) 15605 **MUY MUY LOCO** 9 (H,C) S Dow 4-9-7 **H Davies**
5 (9) -4035 **CHICO DULCE** 32 (P,BF,CD) M Madgwick 6-9-5 **G Wood**
6 (4) 05004 **AMBER HONEY** 39 (D) P Phelan 4-9-3 **P Bradley**
7 (1) 33621 **VICTORY SOUND** 9 (P) M Usher 4-9-3 **C Beasley**
8 (3) 34003 **TASKHEER** 16 (T,BF,CD) G & J Moore 8-9-0 **E Greatrex**
9 (6) 05363 **TURPIN** 11 (P) J Boyle 4-8-13 **P Cosgrave**

5-2 Victory Sound, 4-1 Berning Hot, 5-1 Chico Dulce, 6-1 Taskheer, 8-1 Turpin, Mount Mogan, 14-1 Amber Honey, 16-1 Muy Muy Loco, 20-1 Borderline Madness.

3.23 Handicap (3-Y-O: £3,768: 1m) (10)

1 (3) 0U241 **YAZOO** 5 (B) R Spencer 9-11(6ex) **G Wood**
2 (5) 35-65 **MELODICAL** 16 E Walker 9-9 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
3 (2) 36032 **AURELUNE** 10 R & P Fahey 9-9 **C Beasley**
4 (6) 54-00 **IRISH FUSILIER** 16 G & J Moore 9-8 **P Bradley**
5 (9) 46123 **CRECIENTE** 33 (P) B Millman 9-6 **D Keenan**
6 (10) 00214 **HENFIELD** 25 (V,CD) K Jewell 9-2 **L Morris**
7 (7) 55263 **ERNIE MCCREW** 5 (P) J S Moore 9-1 **E Greatrex**
8 (1) 60500 **MOKATA** 74 (P,T) Adam Kirby 8-10 **J Haynes**
9 (4) 0-00 **CORTADO GIRL** 72 S Pearce 8-10 **R Dawson**
10 (8) 43556 **POETIC GRACE** 29 (B) C Allen 8-10 **Alice Bond (5)**

13-8 Yazoo, 5-1 Aurelune, 13-2 Henfield, 7-1 Creciente, 8-1 Ernie Mccrew, 10-1 Melodical, 16-1 Poetic Grace, Mokata.

4.00 Handicap (£9,631: 5f) (10)

1 (4) 2-100 **LAYLA LIZ** 84 (T,D) A Watson 4-9-8 **L Morris**
2 (8) 11314 **LAW OF AVERAGE** 57 (BF,CD) C Banham 5-9-8 **J Haynes**
3 (7) 00000 **SPARTAN ARROW** 24 (B,D) A Watson 6-9-8 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
4 (2) 10005 **REGAL ENVOY** 28 (P,D) W Knight 7-9-7 **Taylor Fisher**
5 (3) 0-042 **DANDANA** 31 (T) S & E Crisford 3-9-7 **H Davies**
6 (6) -3250 **TATTERSTALL** 46 (P,D) M Dods 6-9-5 **C Beasley**
7 (5) -1201 **SOLAR EDGE** 37 (CD) C Mason 4-9-5 **G Mangan**
8 (9) 06045 **KYLIAN** 14 (V,CD) R Cowell 5-9-5 **E Greatrex**
9 (1) 60104 **MICHAELA'S BOY** 32 (P,CD) R Cowell 6-9-4 **C Bishop**
10 (10) 0-340 **OUR CODY** 64 (D) R Hughes 3-9-4 **D J Murphy (5)**

11-4 Solar Edge, 4-1 Law Of Average, 9-2 Dandana, 8-1 Kylian, Regal Envoy, 12-1 Layla Liz, Michaela's Boy, Tatterstall.

4.35 Handicap (Div I: 3-Y-O: £3,768: 7f) (10)

1 (9) 05331 **ANGELS' SHARE** 9 (CD) W Knight 9-12 **Taylor Fisher**
2 (2) 0-034 **DANCE FANTASY** 194 (T) S & E Crisford 9-8 **H Davies**
3 (3) 04626 **VENETIAN ROMANCE** 19 (P) M Attwater 9-6 **P Bradley**
4 (3) 23652 **ORANGE EMPEROR** 10 (H,P) J Fanshawe 9-6 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
5 (7) 40405 **TIE FIGHTER** 18 S Dow 9-5 **A Voikhansky**
6 (4) 00466 **QUICK QUASAR** 18 (B,D) A Watson 9-5 **L Morris**
7 (10) 063-4 **DARK MANDATE** 23 (H) E J-Houghton 9-2 **C Bishop**
8 (8) 00320 **PENNINE WAY** 23 J Channon 9-0 **E Greatrex**
9 (1) 0050 **MORAVIAN** 68 G & J Moore 8-4 **R Dawson**
10 (5) 00000 **JEFFREY** 33 R Cook & J Bridger 8-4 **G Mangan**

9-4 Angels' Share, 5-2 Orange Emperor, 5-1 Dark Mandate, 10-1 Quick Quasar, Pennine Way, 12-1 Venetian Romance, 14-1 Tie Fighter, Dance Fantasy.

5.15 Handicap (Div II: 3-Y-O: £3,768: 7f) (9)

1 (7) 02662 **STRONG VOICE** 18 (P,T) James Horton 9-9 **C Beasley**
2 (1) 60-55 **GREEN TESTIMONY** 157 (BF) Michael Keady 9-7 **D Keenan**
3 (2) 46050 **VITALITY** 18 C Johnston 9-6 **H Davies**
4 (4) 15021 **ROYAL COUNTY GLORY** 16 (CD) Jack Jones 9-6 **G Wood**
5 (6) 42362 **CREDIT FORGEDD IT** 16 S Dow 9-5 **P Bradley**
6 (5) 04314 **HONKY TONK GIRL** 25 Oliver Cole 9-5 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
7 (9) 55440 **BESSIE WALLIS** 11 (C) M Attwater 9-2 **Doubtful**
8 (8) 30050 **HARLEQUIN BAY** 12 R & P Fahey 8-13 **P Cosgrave**
9 (3) 33060 **REAL GOLD** 16 R Cook & J Bridger 8-4 **L Morris**

2-1 Royal County Glory, 3-1 Credit Forgedd It, 7-2 Strong Voice, 7-1 Honky Tonk Girl, 8-1 Green Testimony, 16-1 Vitality, 20-1 Harlequin Bay, 50-1 Real Gold.

5.47 Handicap (£4,397: 1m) (7)

1 (1) 50635 **POST RIDER** 2 (B,D) Oliver Cole 5-10-0 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
2 (3) -6353 **KAORI** 34 (P) G Boughey 3-9-11 **P Cosgrave**
3 (6) 31632 **LOVERS LEAP** 28 (P,BF) J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-10 **E Greatrex**
4 (4) 06163 **ESPANITA** 9 (H) C Johnston 3-9-5 **C Beasley**
5 (2) 21321 **BUCKLAND BELLE** 10 (D) Ollie Sangster 3-9-4 **L Morris**
6 (5) P0000 **LILI MARLEEN** 9 (D) Jack Jones 4-9-4 **G Wood**
7 (7) 01220 **SUNSHINE AND ROSES** 15 (BF) J Channon 3-9-3 **C Bishop**

2-1 Lovers Leap, 9-4 Buckland Belle, 9-2 Espanita, 7-1 Kaori, 12-1 Post Rider, Sunshine And Roses, 25-1 Lili Marleen.

6.17 Handicap (£3,768: 6f) (10)

1 (9) 31010 **WALKING ON CLOUDS** 25 (P,CD) C Banham 7-9-9 **J Haynes**
2 (7) 0-006 **EXHIBITIONING** 47 (H) W Greatrex 3-9-9 **E Greatrex**
3 (1) 01400 **ALASHOS** 25 (P,CD) C Gordon 4-9-7 **C Bishop**
4 (10) 3-455 **KYOTO** 94 (P) M Murphy 4-9-7 **P Bradley**
5 (3) 60000 **MAYFAIR MARKET** 23 (B) S Woods 3-9-6 **D Keenan**
6 (4) 45010 **RIANKA** 30 (T,D) Martin Dunne 3-9-3 **Olivia Haines (7)**
7 (8) 36026 **MART** 2 (B,T,CD) D Donovan 5-9-2 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
8 (5) -0044 **ICONIC DAWN** 22 (P,BF) H Morrison 3-9-0 **H Davies**
9 (6) 06050 **MAGIC LADY MAE** 19 (P) L Mullaney 3-8-13 **A Voikhansky**
10 (2) 00034 **HENRY TUDOR** 25 (D) M Hoad 4-8-11 **L Morris**

11-4 Iconic Dawn, 9-2 Walking On Clouds, 6-1 Mart, 7-1 Kyoto, Henry Tudor, 8-1 Alashos, 12-1 Rianka, 14-1 Mayfair Market, Exhibitioning, 25-1 Magic Lady Mae.

Musselburgh

Rob Wright

4.07 Thats My Boy Luke **6.20** Carolus Magnus
4.42 Extragalactic **6.50** Boxing Great
5.20 Needin' U **7.20** Supremissy
5.50 Bee Farmer

Going: good
Draw: 5f, high numbers best **Racing TV**

4.07 Handicap (£3,664: 1m) (9)

1 (7) 52032 **BOOK OF LIFE** 10 (P,BF) P Morris 6-9-10 **E Tindall (3)**
2 (2) -0005 **EAGLES DREAM** 16 T Davidson 4-9-9 **Lexie Clarkson (7)**
3 (1) 04563 **THATS MY BOY LUKE** 19 (B,D) T Easterby 5-9-7 **J Dickson (3)**
4 (5) 40562 **KING SHARJA** 16 R Carr 6-9-5 **T Kiely-Marshall**
5 (3) 05100 **DEFENCE MISSILE** 10 (P,D) Miss L Perratt 4-9-4 **A Jary**
6 (8) 00520 **DUE RESPECT** 19 (V) C Bissett 4-9-3 **S Farmer (3)**
7 (6) 41055 **APPROACHING DAWN** 19 (CD) J Goldie 6-9-2 **Amie Waugh**
8 (9) -0530 **OUR NICOLA** 11 D & N Barron 4-9-0 **W Pyle**
9 (4) 30030 **HALE BOPP** 16 (D) D Bourke 8-9-0 **C Horgan (3)**

5-2 Book Of Life, 5-1 Thats My Boy Luke, 6-1 King Sharja, 7-1 Approaching Dawn, 8-1 Hale Bopp, Due Respect, 10-1 Eagles Dream, Defence Missile, 16-1 Our Nicola.

4.42 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £5940: 7f) (9)

1 (1) 2 **EXTRAGALACTIC** 13 W Haggas 9-7 **J Hart**
2 (7) **SHOWCASING GLORY** C Johnston 9-7 **R Scott**
3 (9) 4 **VEGASMILE** 18 (BF) K R Burke 9-7 **S James**
4 (6) **VELOXIAN** G Tuer 9-7 **O Stammers**
5 (2) 02 **HOPE OF ACKLAM** 21 M & D Easterby 9-4 **B Garritty**
6 (5) **PERSIAN SUMMER** M Dods 9-4 **D Nolan**
7 (4) **PIRATES WHISPER** R M Smith 9-4 **JP Sullivan**
8 (3) **SO FARHH** T Easterby 9-4 **S B Kirrane**
9 (8) 6 **LUNA LACY** 14 Adrian Nicholls 9-2 **J Garritty**

6-4 Extragalactic, 3-1 Vegasmile, 6-1 Hope Of Acklam, 10-1 Showcasing Glory, 12-1 Persian Summer, 16-1 Veloxian, Luna Lacy, Pirates Whisper, 20-1 So Farhh.

5.20 Nursery (2-Y-O: £4,187: 5f) (9)

1 (7) 52322 **STAR PEOPLE** 11 (B,BF) J & S Quinn 9-11 **J Hart**
2 (2) 432 **ROYAL STRIKE** 10 (BF) K R Burke 9-9 **P-L Jamin**
3 (8) 02261 **BELLATINA** 32 (D) C Johnston 9-8 **R Scott**
4 (9) 0451 **NEEDIN' U** 18 (H,CD) M & D Easterby 9-7 **B Garritty**
5 (4) 654 **DESERT SMOKE** 33 (B) H Palmer 9-7 **S James**
6 (3) 2214 **LEXINGTON BOOM** 11 (D) G Tuer 9-6 **O Stammers**
7 (6) 31346 **FERN CLYDE** 40 (H,T) T Easterby 9-3 **S B Kirrane**
8 (5) 6100 **MOONLIGHT TANGO** 43 (D) K Ryan 9-1 **O McSweeney**
9 (1) 445 **INCA WARRIOR** 11 N Tinkler 8-13 **A Jary (3)**

5-2 Star People, 100-30 Needin' U, 5-1 Royal Strike, 7-1 Bellatina, Desert Smoke, 10-1 Lexington Boom, 12-1 Fern Clyde, 20-1 others.

5.50 Handicap (£7,851: 1m 1f) (11)

1 (1) 60060 **CALLIANASSA** 22 B Ellison 5-10-2 **P-L Jamin**
2 (5) 5-002 **STYLE OF LIFE** 14 (P,T,D) H Bethell 6-10-2 **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
3 (3) 60001 **SUNRISEONTHEBOYNE** 10 B Haslam 4-10-1 **J Hart**
4 (9) 12261 **YERMANTHERE** 11 T Easterby 8-10-0 **J Dickson (5)**
5 (11) 00500 **GOOD MORNING ALEX** 14 (D) D & N Barron 5-9-13 **W Pyle**
6 (4) 20454 **BEE FARMER** 10 (B,T) E Bethell 3-9-8 **S James**
7 (10) 20053 **SHOWCASING STAR** 11 C Johnston 3-9-7 **R Scott**
8 (7) 20155 **MINAUN VIEW** 11 (P,T,BF) A McGuinness (Ire) 4-9-7 **C Horgan (5)**
9 (6) 10605 **MAYOR OF MAGHERA** 19 (P,CD) R M Smith 4-9-1 **JP Sullivan**
10 (2) 56542 **MOTAWAARED** 19 (P) J Goldie 4-9-0 **Amie Waugh (3)**
11 (8) 54356 **PENELOPE'S SISTER** 10 J Goldie 6-8-11 **S Farmer (5)**

100-30 Yermanthere, 9-2 Sunriseontheboyne, 5-1 Style Of Life, 7-1 Motawaared, 8-1 Minaun View, Bee Farmer, 10-1 Showcasing Star, Callianassa.

6.20 Handicap (£4,187: 7f) (10)

1 (8) 25331 **BLACK STORM** 26 (B,D) K Scott 5-10-0 **J Hart**
2 (2) 51506 **JESMOND DAWN** 7 (D) G Tuer 5-9-11 **O Stammers**
3 (10) 02030 **PICKERSGILL** 10 (H,D) I Jardine 4-9-11 **G Fairley**
4 (7) 26120 **CAROLUS MAGNUS** 26 (CD) M & D Easterby 8-9-10 **B Garritty**
5 (4) 13523 **MASABAN** 35 E Bethell 3-9-9 **S James**
6 (5) 02033 **VINCE LE PRINCE** 18 (B,T,D) T Easterby 6-9-8 **S B Kirrane**
7 (3) 01300 **ELIZABETTY** 162 (D) B Ellison 3-9-7 **P-L Jamin**
8 (1) 00230 **KEEP ME STABLE** 18 (CD) Miss L Perratt 6-9-1 **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
9 (6) 46116 **MONHAMMER** 18 (CD) Miss L Perratt 8-8-13 **E Tindall (5)**
10 (9) 04320 **COCONUT BAY** 18 (D) T Davidson 7-8-11 **R Scott**

9-4 Black Storm, 3-1 Masaban, 7-1 Vince Le Prince, 10-1 Monhammer, Jesmond Dawn, Elizabetty, 12-1 Coconut Bay, 14-1 Keep Me Stable.

6.50 Handicap (£10,308: 2m 2f) (7)

1 (7) 65333 **SAX APPEAL** 69 C Johnston 6-10-2 **R Scott**
2 (2) 64052 **WAHRAAN** J41 (T) J Bedi 8-9-12 **D Nolan**
3 (4) 06011 **BOXING GREAT** 8 (T) K Thornton (Ire) 6-9-10 **J Hart**
4 (1) 40222 **FAST FRED** 18 (P,C) Phillip Makin 6-9-7 **S James**
5 (3) 30036 **TROJAN SUN** 6 (P,CD) J Goldie 6-9-4 **Amie Waugh (3)**
6 (5) -3540 **DINO BELLAGIO** 21 (P) D McCain 7-9-2 **P-L Jamin**
7 (6) 25450 **SIMPLE STAR** 19 (T,C) Gary Rutherford 8-8-11 **A Jary (3)**

2-1 Boxing Great, 3-1 Wahraan, 4-1 Sax Appeal, 5-1 Fast Fred, 10-1 Trojan Sun, Dino Bellagio, 50-1 Simple Star.

7.20 Handicap (£3,664: 5f) (13)

1 (4) 31040 **SUPREMISSY** 16 (CD) I Jardine 3-9-9 **G Fairley**
2 (2) 00056 **WRESTLING REVENUE** 93 (BF,D) B Haslam 5-9-9 **J Hart**
3 (8) -5005 **WITH GLORY** 105 Miss L Perratt 3-9-8 **W Pyle**
4 (3) 42314 **DORALEE** 11 (D) D & N Barron 5-9-8 **D Nolan**
5 (12) 06040 **FALCON QUEEN** 22 R M Smith 3-9-6 **S Farmer (5)**
6 (5) 42220 **SO GRATEFUL** 19 (D) M & D Easterby 8-9-5 **B Garritty**
7 (11) 14661 **SIXCOR** 17 (P,CD) Miss L Perratt 8-9-5 **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
8 (6) 50015 **ROYAL DUKE** 3 (P,T,CD) R M Smith 5-9-4 **C Horgan (5)**
9 (9) 55600 **MORETONS** 82 (B) S Waugh 3-9-4 **Amie Waugh (3)**
10 (13) 02635 **GWEN TENNYSON** 9 G Tutty 3-9-1 **J Dickson (5)**
11 (10) 30002 **SKI ANGEL** 19 (P,CD) R M Smith 6-9-1 **R Scott**
12 (7) 00650 **FEAR AND FAST** 58 (W) J Goldie 4-9-0 **S James**
13 (1) 0-000 **HARD NUT** 74 (CD) Miss L Perratt 9-9-0 **A Jary (3)**

9-2 Sixcor, 5-1 Ski Angel, 11-2 Royal Duke, 13-2 Doralee, So Grateful, 8-1 Supremissy, 12-1 Wrestling Revenue, Gwen Tennyson.

YESTERDAY'S RACING RESULTS

Chester

Going: Good to Soft (soft in places)

1.37 (6f 17yd) 1, **Donna Beauty** (C Beasley, 7-4); 2, Water Angel (22-1); 3, The Thinking Man (100-30). 9 ran. NR: Brewster. 17½l, sh. C Johnston.

2.12 (7f 1yd) 1, **She's Too Kool** (J Nicholls, 7-4); 2, Dovecote (8-11 fav); 3, Skewsby (50-1). 4 ran. 7l, sh. C O'Connell.

2.47 (1m 2f 70yd) 1, **Meet Me In Meraki** (F Marsh, 100-30 fav); 2, Condotti (14-1); 3, Risk Averse Rebel (16-1). 11 ran. ¾l, 2¼l. P Evans.

3.17 (5f 15yd) 1, **Baker Blue** (E Greatrex, 3-1 fav); 2, Roman Dragon (14-1); 3, Betsen (22-1). 10 ran. 17½l, nk. D Cunha.

3.53 (7f 1yd) 1, **King Of Thunder** (D Probert, 10-1); 2, Start Me Up (10-1); 3, Blue Prince (4-1). 12 ran. NR: Dublin Bay. 2¼l, ns. H Palmer.

4.28 (7f 1yd) 1, **Ghisa** (G Wood, 7-2); 2, Homestrait (7-1); 3, Rogue Citation (9-2). 13 ran. NR: Bami. nk, 17½l. C Fellowes.

5.03 (1m 7f 196yd) 1, **Cascade Hall** (Lauren Young, 2-1); 2, Queen Roslyn (7-2); 3, Sir Griflet (10-1). 12

Europe dig deep to finish day level

Cathy Harris
Cromvoirt, Netherlands

NAOMI BAKER/GETTY IMAGES

Ciganda celebrates earning a half point on the 18th green after Kim, below, won a point for the US

The veteran Spaniard Carlota Ciganda holed out from 15 feet to claim an unlikely par and steal a half-point for Team Europe and level the scores at 4-4 against the US.

In a thrilling fourball session with the momentum swinging between the teams, the Spanish pair of Ciganda and Julia López Ramírez were in all sorts of trouble down the 18th before Nelly Korda and Lauren Coughlan left their birdie putts tantalisingly short. That opened the door for Ciganda.

Both captains, Europe's Anna Nordqvist and Angela Stanford of the US, took the opportunity to play all their rookies on a dismal, wet day in front of huge partisan crowds. For only the third time in 20 editions of the Solheim Cup, the morning session on the first day ended 2-2 with Nordqvist saying she was trusting the process after choosing to rest her two winning pairs in the afternoon fourballs.

It may have appeared an odd decision to many and one she may regret after Charley Hull and Lottie Woad failed to curb a spirited fightback by Angel Yin and Yealimi Noh in the afternoon to halve their match. It was a baptism of fire for Woad, the English rookie playing alongside Hull to lead off Team Europe's challenge in what Nordqvist described as "a very easy pairing."

Woad, 22, joined the professional ranks little over a year ago but such is her skill and maturity you'd be hard pressed to believe it. Unfazed by nerves or the raucous atmosphere on the 1st tee, she said she'd enjoyed the occasion but was clearly disappointed at not giving Europe the start they hoped for. Pitted against Korda, the world No1, and Allisen Corpuz, the Americans created history when they became the first duo to win five Solheim Cup matches in a row following their comfortable 4&3 victory.

Stung by the defeat, Hull and Woad came out firing in the afternoon racing to 3up through six holes before being reeled in. Enjoying a three-hole advantage through the 11th, Noh led the charge as the Americans pulled it back all-square and in a tense final hole, Noh missed a 12-footer to win the contest.

"It was a very good match" said Woad. "I think we played great overall but they kept fighting back. My putt at the last kind of summed up the back-nine I would say."

Hull didn't mince her words saying she was tired and couldn't wait to get to bed after a long day leading out Europe in both sessions. She said: "I like matches like that and with the wind and rain in the middle of the round there were some long iron shots. Lottie played great."

Yin dispelled any doubts about her fitness striking the ball solidly in only her third competitive round since June. An exuberant personality, the 27 year-old has recently returned to the action after missing two months in the summer with undisclosed gastrointestinal issues losing thirty five pounds in the process. "I'm happy we took it to the 18th" she said. "But the pressure of going out first didn't really help me."

The European all-rookie pairing of Mimi Rhodes and Nastasia Nadaud sparkled on their debuts, displaying poise and confidence in a superb performance to beat Corpuz and Auston Kim 2&1. Rhodes said the key to their success was giving themselves plenty of looks at birdies. She added: "Between ourselves and the caddies we had a good chemistry out there and it was really good often having two balls close." The Frenchwoman, 21, added: "We tried to relax and enjoy it and we made the clutch putts when we needed to" she said.

At the last Solheim Cup in Virginia, Alison Lee played while she was pregnant with her son Levi and after confessing she had done everything possible to claim her place in the US team. She won both her matches.

By her own high standards Ireland's Leona Maguire hasn't enjoyed a hugely successful season but the hard-earned point she claimed with Germany's Esther Henseleit in beating Andrea Lee and Lindy Duncan 2up, marked a significant milestone. In 2021 she broke the all-time rookie points record in either the Solheim or Ryder Cup with a total of 4.5. And in the opening foursomes she took her tally to nine points, giving her the highest winning percentage of any Solheim Cup player.

Henseleit, who lost a sudden-death play-off in this summer's AIG Women's Open, proved the perfect foil for Maguire. The German said: "The back nine was tricky and played long in the wind and rain but we ground it out and in the end got the point so we're happy."

How they stand

Europe 4pts level with United States 4
(Europe names first)

Foursomes
C Hull and L Woad lost to A Corpuz and N Korda 4&3; N Koerstz Madsen and C Boutier lost to A Lee and L Coughlan 3&2; L Maguire and E Henseleit bt A Lee and L Duncan 2 holes; L Grant and M Stark bt R Zhang and J Kupcho 3&2.

Fourballs
Hull and Woad halved with Y Noh and A Yin.
Boutier and Koertz Madsen lost to M Khang and Lee.
M Rhodes and N Nadaud bt A Corpuz and A Kim 2&1.
C Ciganda and J Lopez Ramirez halved with N Korda and L Coughlin.

THE TIMES
MAGAZINE
12.09.26

COUNT BINFACE
MY NEXT BY-ELECTION

STILL GOT IT AT 73

At home with Pierce Brosnan

CAITLIN MORAN
How I got my mojo back and learnt to be hopeful again
Exclusive extract from her brilliant new book

MONDAY
ROLEX
OYSTER PERPETUAL
DAY-DATE
28
SUPERLATIVE CHRONOMETER
OFFICIALLY CERTIFIED
SWISS MADE

REACH FOR THE CROWN

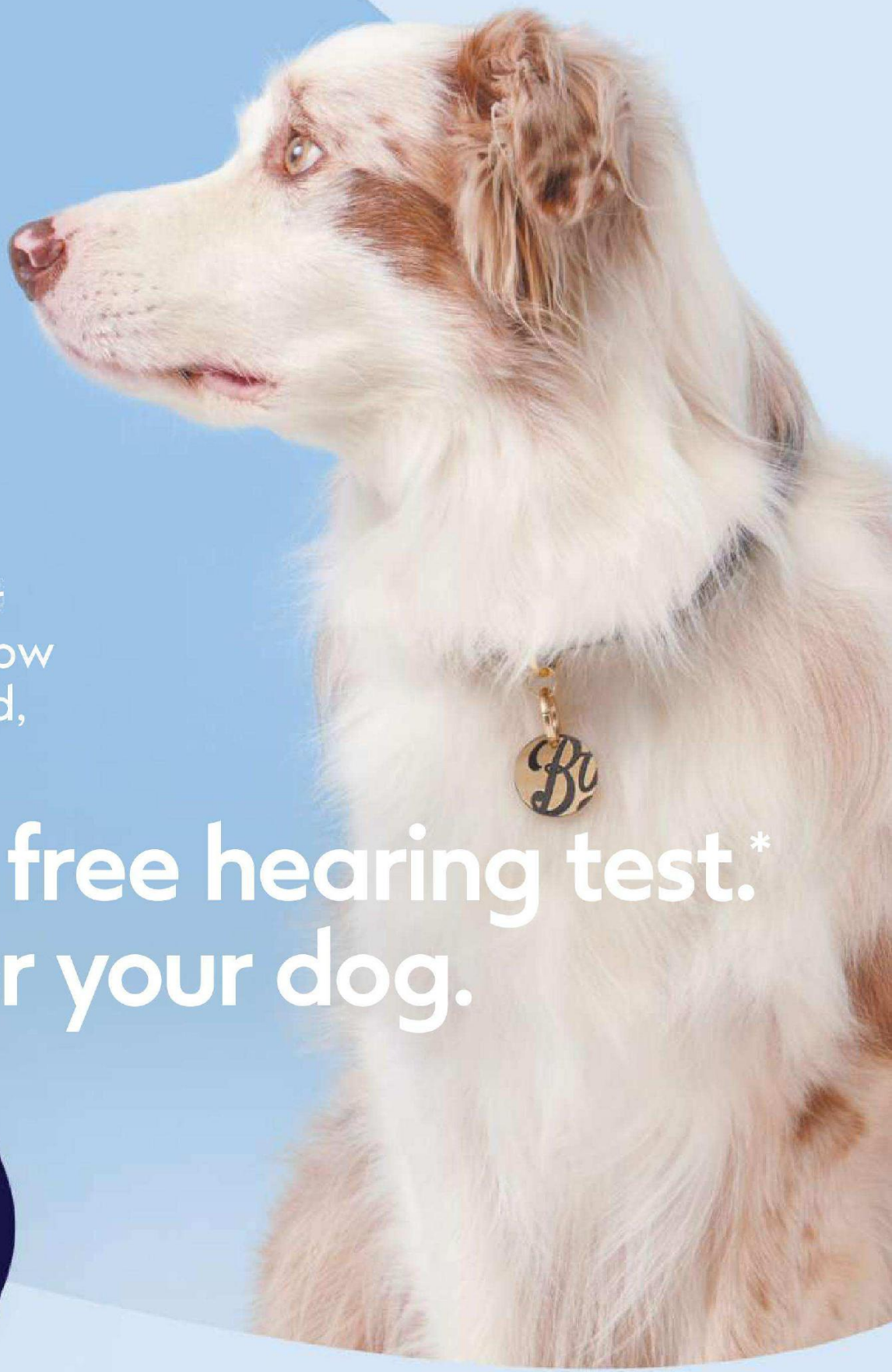
THE DAY-DATE

Lunn's

QUEEN'S ARCADE BELFAST
VICTORIA SQUARE BELFAST
LUNNS.COM

ROLEX

WATCH FEATURED SUBJECT TO STOCK AVAILABILITY



You didn't hear him whining, now he's devastated, probably.

Book a free hearing test.* Do it for your dog.

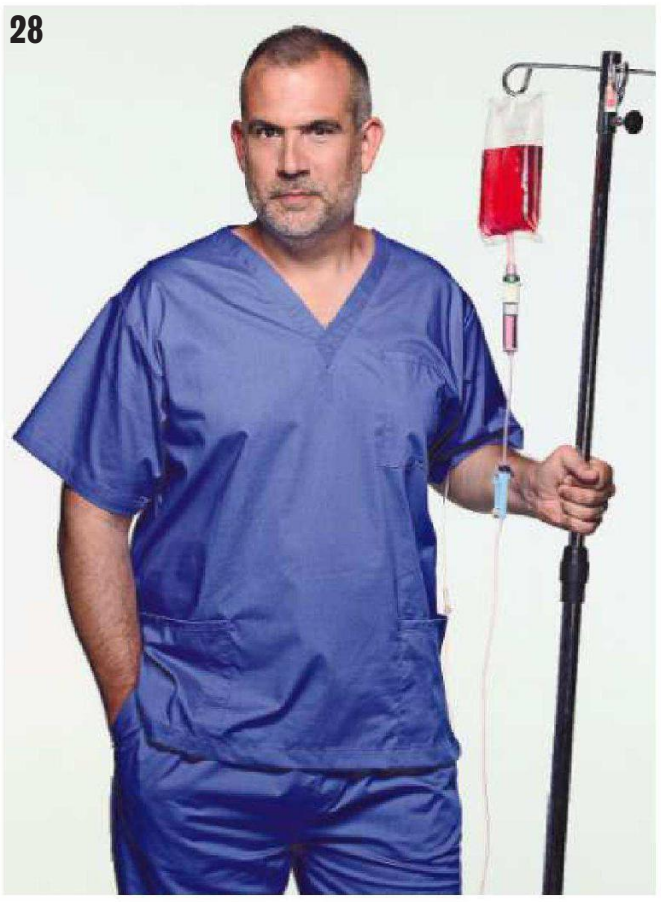
Complete hearing plans from £22 per month**

Visit **bootshearingcare.com** or call **0345 200 7052†**

*Over 18s and Hearingcare stores only. ** Requires minimum 10% deposit. Boots Hearingcare is a credit broker. Introducing credit provided by Novuna Personal Finance. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Subject to acceptance, terms and conditions apply. †Local call rates apply, mobiles may vary.

Boots Hearingcare
With you. For life.

12.09.26



7 Count Binface For my next trick: another by-election? **9 What I've learnt** I made clothes for Paul McCartney, he made me a cheese sandwich, says Sir Paul Smith. **12 How to be hopeful** In an exclusive extract from her new book, Caitlin Moran explains how she finally overcame her lifelong anxiety. **22 Cover story Pierce Brosnan at 73** The actor on marriage, *MobLand* and being "blessed with good genes". **28 Are supplements worth our money?** We spend £3.6 billion a year on them, says TV doctor Dr Xand van Tulleken, but are they are a con? **33 Eat!** Easy potato recipes — gnocchi, rösti and more. **40 James Nesbitt** The Northern Irish actor's latest project? Advocating for victims of the Troubles. **44 'They were like living skeletons'** The bestselling historian Max Hastings reveals the untold stories behind the liberation of Belsen concentration camp by British forces. **50 Dining and debauchery** Former GQ editor Dylan Jones looks back on wild times at Le Caprice, the Ivy et al. **54 Our son is in a coma. Doctors say there's no hope** A father's agonising diary. **60 Giles Coren reviews** Tower House/Banquet 88. **66 Beta male: Robert Crampton** The end of the world is nigh. I'm stocking up on Spam.

FAB FIVE: MEN'S GILETS

ARKET, £65
Stylish padded vest in water-repellent materials (arket.com)

ARC'TERYX, £130
Fleece vest by a cool hiking brand (arcteryx.com)

PATAGONIA, £180
Wind-blocking, heat-trapping fleece vest (eu.patagonia.com)

CANADA GOOSE, £575
Filled with duck down and duck feathers for warmth (harrods.com)

GANT, £170
Quilted, weather resistant, with large pockets (gant.co.uk)

CHOSEN BY GEORGINA ROBERTS

COVER: DANIELLE LEVITT/AUGUST IMAGE. THIS PAGE: ROBERT WILSON

EDITOR NICOLA JEAL **DEPUTY EDITOR** LOUISE FRANCE **ART DIRECTOR** CHRIS HITCHCOCK **ASSOCIATE EDITOR** JANE MULKERRINS **ASSISTANT EDITOR** TONY TURNBULL
FEATURES EDITOR MONIQUE RIVALLAND **COMMISSIONING EDITOR** GEORGINA ROBERTS **CHIEF SUB-EDITOR** CHRIS RILEY **DEPUTY ART DIRECTOR** PAUL REED
DEPUTY CHIEF SUB-EDITOR KEVIN GRANT **PICTURE EDITOR** ANNA BASSETT **DEPUTY PICTURE EDITOR** LUCY DALEY **CONTRIBUTING EDITOR** BRIDGET HARRISON

Mortgages for every stage

We could help you feel right at home, whatever stage you're at.

ybs.co.uk/mortgages

10.6k+ reviews

Trustpilot

YORKSHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY

Since 1864

Yorkshire Building Society is a member of the Building Societies Association and is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Yorkshire Building Society is entered in the Financial Services Register and its registration number is 106085. Head Office: Yorkshire House, Yorkshire Drive, Bradford BD5 8LJ. **ybs.co.uk**

YBM 13895 21 08 26

JON HARVEY (Count Binface)

Oh no, not another by-election — and I haven't washed my armour since Clacton

The schools are back. The football's on. And for me it's the start of a new phase of life. Since I stood as a candidate in the Clacton by-election, I've spent the past month being described by Nigel Farage and his acolytes as the face of the establishment. That doesn't happen every summer. Then again, Farage also called me an "extreme left-wing" comedian and a "nobody". Make your mind up, Nige.

To discover I'm the face of the establishment was surprising, seeing as I spent the entire campaign with my face concealed inside a giant trash can.

Until this summer, I've been able to potter along happily anonymous in my everyday existence while moonlighting as Binface. (It's my second most futile hobby after being a Spurs fan.) For nine years I'd thought of myself as being fundamentally a rubbish Bruce Wayne, but not any longer. Since I outed myself in this very magazine, I've had to update the comic-book parallel. Now I'm a shit Tony Stark.

So what happened next? Could I rest on my space laurels as the winner of the Clacton by-election (among the candidates who could be bothered to show up at the result)? Far from it. For starters, there's the day job: I'm currently producing Radio 4's *Unspeakable*, a comedy game about words starring Phil Wang and Susie Dent. Did you know that "arsefoot" was 16th-century slang for penguin? Me neither. I adore this show.

Meanwhile the good lady countess and I have been trekking across the country, with our tiny, 8-month-old binling in tow. First came a brief holiday to Whitstable, where I managed to pick up a secondhand *Spies Like Us* LP — Sir Paul McCartney and Dan Aykroyd? Take my money.

Then we plodded up the M6 (my kingdom for a spaceship!) to attend a friend's wedding in Preston, where my wife was the celebrant and I conducted my old a cappella choir. They're a motley crew cobbled together after a ten-year gap, much like the current cabinet. As it happened, they smashed it.

In between those two jaunts, I squeezed in a lightning trip to Edinburgh to perform a couple of shows at the Fringe. In a sign that things have changed, as I reached the theatre I was recognised in human form. In a sign that I'm not yet Taylor Swift, it was only by one elderly couple. The lady shuffled up to me, reached out, took my hand and patted it. I wasn't sure where this was going. Then she smiled and whispered, "Keep doing what you're doing." In the background her husband stood brandishing a camera that pleasingly looked about as old as me.

MATT CROCKETT, GETTY IMAGES

The good lady countess and I have been trekking across the country, with our tiny binling in tow

As the Binface ball has kept rolling, so has the correspondence. For instance, I'm still being sent photographs of poorly placed hand dryers in pub toilets up and down the UK, and the mother of a young girl called Niamh emailed a drawing of me in the form of a sausage dog. It's brilliant. Thanks, Niamh! It's hard to keep up with it all, and I haven't got round to washing my armour since Clacton. I must do that soon or it will start to grow mould again.

With parliament back in full swing, I've had the popcorn out watching Andy Burnham duck and weave his way through his first few PMQs. But disappointingly it looks like we're stuck in another phoney war until the budget. Before then, questions will continue to be deflected by ministers with variations on the classic, trite non-answer, "You wouldn't expect me to make a pre-emptive statement about that here. You'll just have to wait."

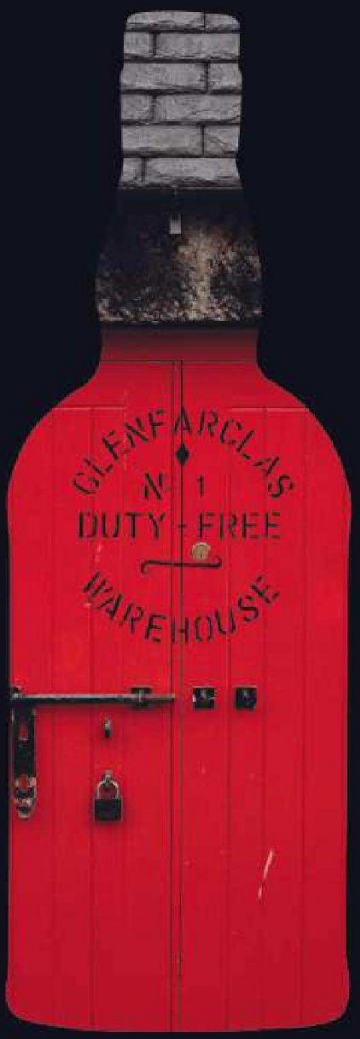
There's at least one more by-election to look forward to this year. Actually, "look forward" is putting it strongly. Let's just say it's happening. This is thanks to Sir Keir Starmer going back on his promise to serve out his term as a backbencher. For Starmer's last act in domestic politics to be a U-turn is a political epitaph almost too perfect to be true. You've got to admire his chutzpah, and then almost immediately afterwards despise it instead.

However, the truth is that Sir Keir and I are not so different. We're both high-profile British political figures in our own way, we've spent roughly the same amount of time currying favour with Labour backbenchers, and we've both been offered a free pair of designer glasses. (Only one of us said yes.)

As for Starmer's successor in Holborn and St Pancras, that contest is going to be a heated battle between Labour and the Greens. But what about Binface? Is he going to stand against Zack Polanski? It would make for a unique hat-trick of election campaigns against party leaders in the same year. I have a very clear answer. You wouldn't expect me to make a pre-emptive statement about that here. You'll just have to wait. ■

Glenfarclas®

Established 1836



SAME WHISKY, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.

Behind the iconic red doors lie the dunnage warehouses
that slowly mature the past, the present and the future of Glenfarclas.

drinkaware

GLENFARCLAS.CO.UK

What I've learnt Paul Smith

Fashion designer Sir Paul Smith, 80, grew up in Nottinghamshire, where he opened his first shop in 1970. His famous customers have included David Bowie and Sirs Paul McCartney and Daniel Day-Lewis, and he was knighted in 2000 for services to fashion. His memoir was published this month. He lives in London with his wife, Pauline.

PORTRAIT Daragh Soden

'David Bowie used to visit me. And Orlando Bloom worked in my shop. He's still cheeky'

INTERVIEW Georgina Roberts

After a cycling accident at 17, I was in hospital for three months. Sixteen people died while I was in hospital because it was an era when Nottinghamshire had many coalmines, so there were a lot of mining accidents. The curtain would go around the bed in the middle of the night and you'd realise somebody had passed away.

Paul McCartney made me a cheese sandwich. And we had a cup of tea together after I styled ten outfits for him. It was the biggest sale I'd ever had — in those days it was an enormous amount of money; nowadays it's probably the price of one outfit. He was very down to earth.

Orlando Bloom was a shop boy in our jeans shop. I saw him recently. He's still a cheeky chappy.

In the late Seventies, there was a phone call from the shop floor saying, "David Bowie is here." Young people had come from every doorway — I don't know how they knew he was there. Over the years, he would come to my studio; it's full of objects and books. He was a very curious man, asking, why have you got that? When he passed away, the most emotional thing for Pauline and me was the fact that he had sung *The Party's Over* to us when we left a restaurant one night.

I find working from home disappointing. There's a lack of camaraderie and no spirit in the building. You've got to be there as a team. I never work from home. I'm always in the office. I arrive at 6am after having a swim at 5am every morning.

The national insurance hike cost us about £380,000 more overnight. Where are you going to find that? And there's no duty-free shopping any more — that was a major blow. It's like being in a boxing ring; you get so many punches that you can't really calculate for.

I saw Giorgio Armani just before he died. He invited me to a very big show, which I presumed he knew was going to be his last. He was a very shy man, and a really nice one. He was fascinated by my success in Japan. He still liked to visit his shop [in Milan]. I once saw him sweeping up outside, which I'm prone to do.

I left school at 15. I wasn't very bright, but I was good at woodwork. I didn't know I was dyslexic. I just wanted to be a racing cyclist — it was my dream. But I definitely wouldn't have made it because I just wasn't good enough.

Tony Blair was a big wearer of Paul Smith. Without realising it, I've dressed many prime ministers over the years. Their stylists normally come into the Covent Garden shop and pick up suits for them. Andy Burnham can happily shop with us.

I don't have an email address. I've got two lovely assistants who do have email addresses; those poor buggers get about 600 emails a day. Pauline doesn't have a phone. We communicated for so many years when there wasn't a mobile phone — I used to travel all across the country to find somebody who might make trousers for me, and if I was running late, I'd find a phone box and call her.

When I started my first little London shop in 1979, Jack Nicholson came in. And Harrison Ford, who is still a really good customer.

The day I was knighted and got married was an amazing day. But not one that was planned. We chose the date for the wedding, then someone who worked with me said, "We should find out when the knighthood's going to be, because you travel so much." She said, "You're never going to believe it, but you've got one in the morning and one in the afternoon." It was very special and beautiful.

Life with Pauline is incredibly special. We've been together a long time, since 1967. Like with business, it's all about balance.

The past few years have been very challenging because of Brexit and Covid. But we're still here after 56 years.

Dress your age. Dress to fit your body shape and your lifestyle. As long as you do that, you'll be all right. ■

Threads: My Life in Style *by Paul Smith is out now (Macmillan, £25)*

RENAULT 4 E-TECH ELECTRIC

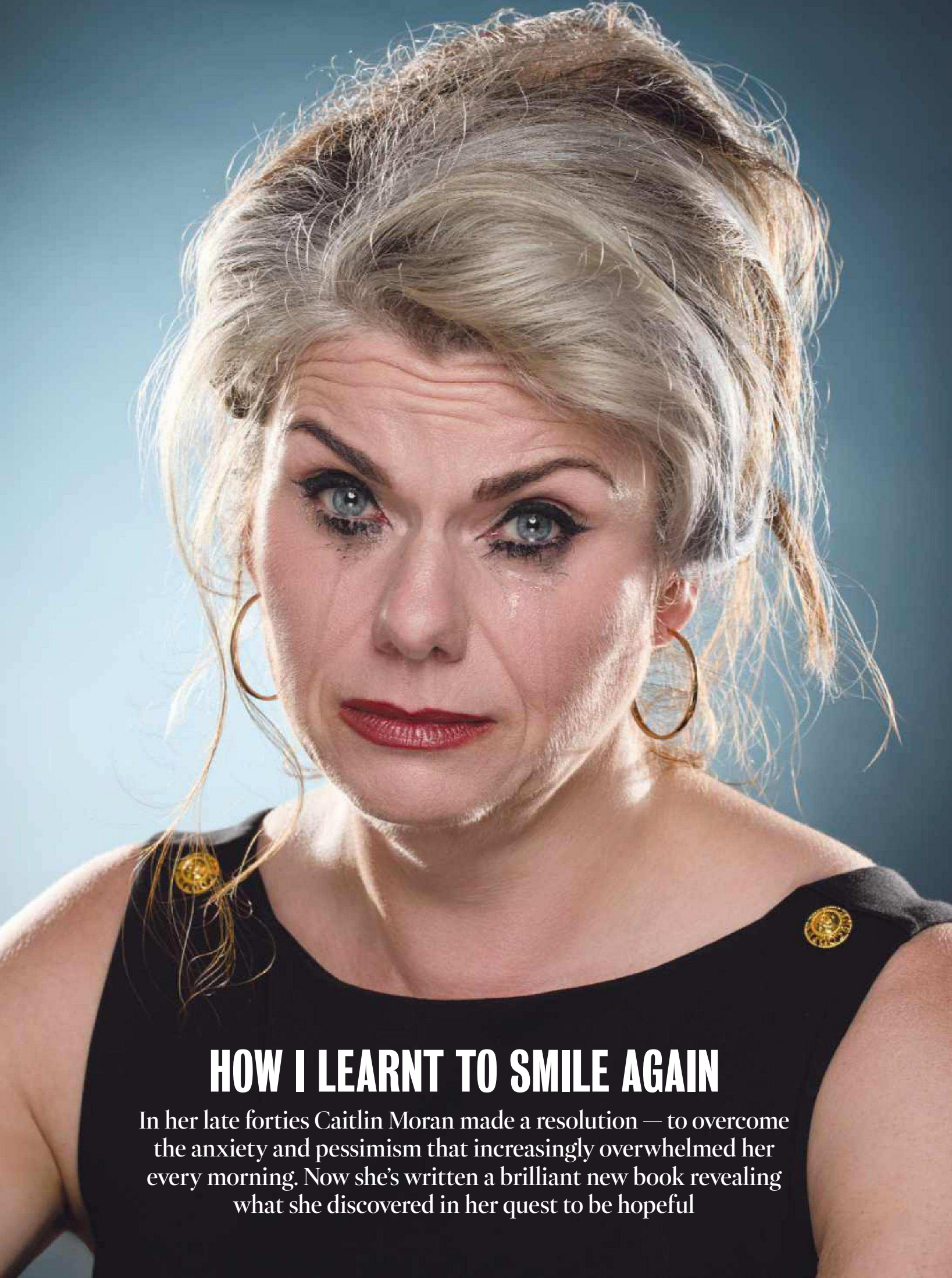
ELECTRIC CANVAS ROOF

with plein sud® canvas roof[1]
up to 249 miles range[2]
Google built-in & over 100 apps[3]
low loading sill and 420l boot space[4]

discover more

(1) available depending on version. (2) wltp figures shown are for comparability purposes only. actual real world driving results may vary depending on factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted after registration, weather conditions, driving styles and vehicle load. (3) Google, Google Play, Google Maps, Waze and other marks are trademarks of Google LLC. (4) equivalent to 375 dm3 according to the VDA 210 standard.

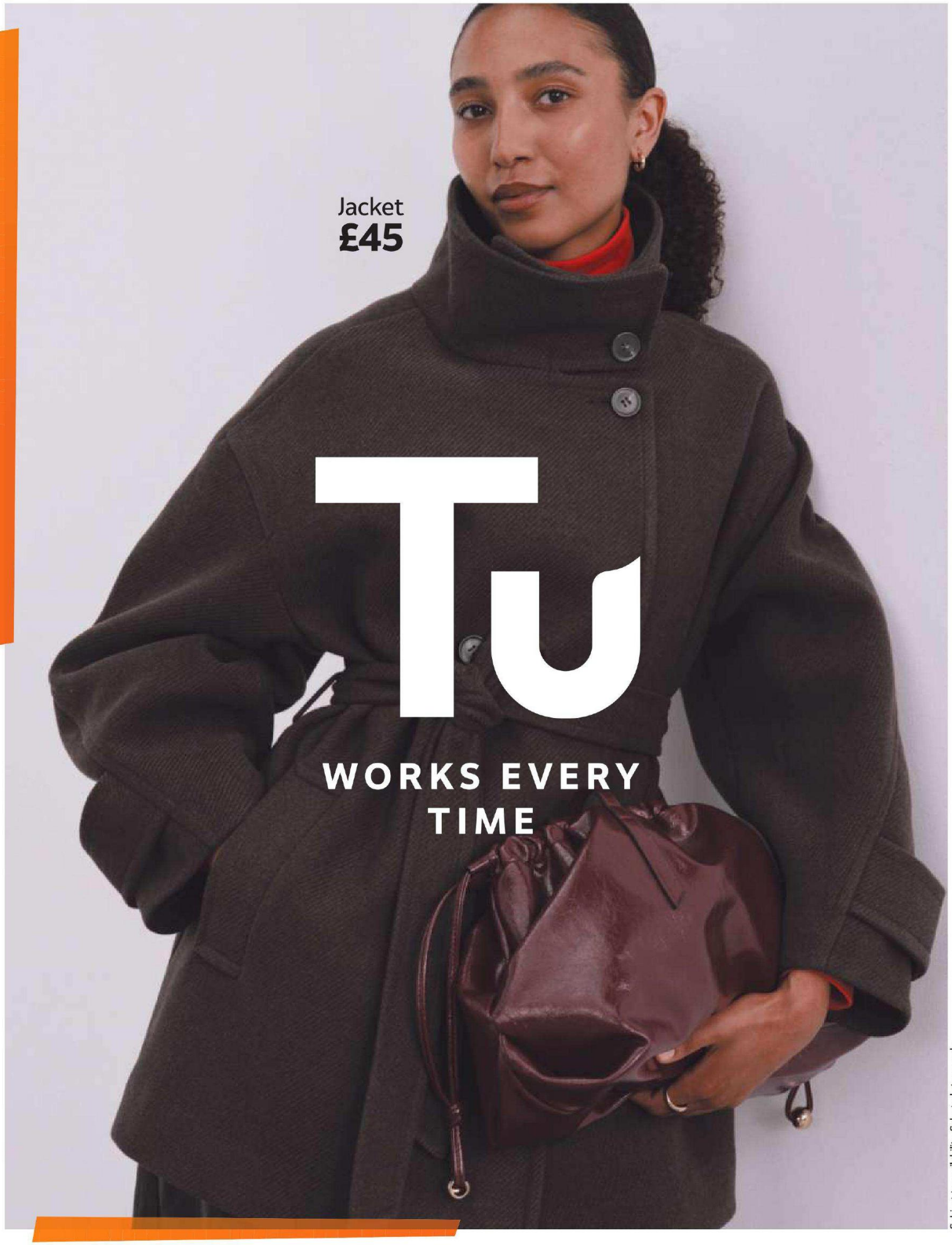
renault.co.uk



HOW I LEARNT TO SMILE AGAIN

In her late forties Caitlin Moran made a resolution — to overcome the anxiety and pessimism that increasingly overwhelmed her every morning. Now she's written a brilliant new book revealing what she discovered in her quest to be hopeful

Caitlin Moran, 51, photographed by Robert Wilson. Styling: Prue White



Subject to availability. Selected stores only.

tu.co.uk Free Click & Collect. Delivery from £3.95.

Sainsbury's

"Oh my God, we need that right now!"

This has been the response, 99 per cent of the time, when I've told people the title of my new book — *How to Be Hopeful.* The 1 per cent exception was my most reliably dolorous Brummie friend who replied, in full Eeyore Mode, "So, it's fiction, then?"

But no, it's not fiction, and yes, the reason I wrote it was because, yes, we *do* need something called *How to Be Hopeful* right now. The past 15 or so years feel like a shock to the system: Brexit; Trump; seven prime ministers in ten years; conspiracy theories; fake news; people being publicly shamed and "cancelled" online. Entire families and social groups splintering down ideological fault lines.

The Facebook prompt on my homepage — "What's on your mind, Caitlin?" — if answered honestly, would, most days, receive the reply, "Really overwhelmed and pessimistic, Mark Zuckerberg. Fairly certain humanity is heading in the wrong direction. Thinking that, if I had the money, I would do what you have done — buy an Apocalypse Bunker on Hawaii, and prepare to leave civilisation behind."

As I explain in *How to Be Hopeful,* this was, indeed, what I was preparing to do. I had an offer accepted on a remote cottage in Wales, and I fully intended to put up some polytunnels, buy some goats and just — to be brisk — *run away* from it all.

However, once the survey came back, I realised why it's only the tech-bro billionaires who have Apocalypse Bunkers: it's *really expensive* to found your own remote civilisation, from scratch.

And so, stuck in my actual, normal life — like everyone — I had to try to find a way to, well, feel better about the world. Fall back in love with humanity again. Avoid the anxiety and overwhelm. And become, yes, hopeful again.

I realised the only truly seismic cataclysm that *has* happened in the past 15 years or so is the way we interact with the world. *Who* is telling us what to think, and *how* they are telling us. The devices in our pockets, spiking our cortisol every time we read something. The AI slop, fake news, Russian propaganda bots, and red-faced billionaires screaming, "Traitor!"

Once you delete them from your phone, you seek out the *good* news — and it's there, every day. You have time to find things you love, and defend them. You realise you can't change the world — but you can change *your* world. *Your* neighbourhood. *Your* chosen causes.

And you start to feel, well ... *hopeful.*

I have some magic pills in my pocket — beta blockers

My father is a very complex individual, and much of his role-modelling was, let us say, poor — but he *did* know a lot about mind-bending drugs, and one of his best pieces of advice to his children was: "You take a drug *until you've learnt everything you can from it.* If you're taking something regularly, you've missed the point. You're not a psychic cosmonaut any more — you're just someone who enjoys taking drugs. You're just ... a junkie."

As I progressed through my forties — still profoundly, constantly anxious; still weirdly, darkly proud of being so constantly anxious — I thought of his words more and more. Was I *learning* anything from anxiety any more? Or was I just ... a junkie?

Just after my 48th birthday, having realised I had an addiction to anxiety, I decided I was going to give up my addiction to anxiety.

It was something I was genuinely terrified to do. I'd convinced myself that I would become fatally lazy, stupid and vulnerable without anxiety.

That my children would be in danger if I wasn't constantly hypervigilant about their every move.

And that I would simply not be able to write — and would, therefore, instantly become unemployed — if I did not sit at my desk every morning with my guts cramping, and aching. I gave everyone a Talk of Doom: "I'm about to become a very lazy, boring, *poor* person," I told my family. "You will have to get used to me being some bovine, mooing, passive item, whose work rate drops through the floor. If you lose your phone? I'm sorry, but I simply won't 'magically' know where it is any more. Without anxiety, I will *not* be noting, on a Tuesday, that you left it in a bag, hanging over the back of a chair. This is because I will no longer be agonisingly anxious about the loss of your telephonic communication abilities resulting, ultimately, in your kidnap, and death — all of which could be avoided had I remembered where your phone was. Sadly, guys, because of me, *you might have to die.* And, for this, I apologise in advance. But I *am* about to become *sub-optimal.* Because I cannot go on being this hypervigilant and anxious any longer."

First, I had done the obvious thing: visited my doctor, and told him about my anxiety. He immediately prescribed me beta blockers. Indeed, he seemed *astonished* I had not asked for them before.

"You've felt like this for *30 years*?" he said, scribbling on his pad.

"Thirty-*five*," I said, proudly.

"Why did you not ask for them before?"

I told him the truth: "Thinking about it made me anxious."

With these magic pills now in my pocket, I knew what I would do, when I felt that first, electric, churning rush through my skin. I would take a beta blocker, and then — in the 20 or so minutes while I waited for it to kick in — I would just remove myself from the anxiety-making situation entirely.

On the first day, I had to walk away from my desk so frequently, and go into the garden, that, in the end, I didn't bother taking my coat and shoes off. I sat in my chair looking like I was ready to go for a hike in the Lake District. I had a woolly hat on, and everything. It was very cold outside.

And my anxiety was *stubborn.*

"Well — now you're *behind* on your work," it would say, as I sat in the garden, deep breathing and sipping herbal tea. "You are *really screwing up your day.* You are going to *need* me, when you get back to your desk. You're going to *need* that adrenaline burst — or you won't write anything at *all.* Remember why I turned up in the first place? It's because, without me, you are slow, and lazy. You *wanted* me."

The day took on a mad routine: back to the desk, adrenaline rush, up from the desk, garden, back to the desk, adrenaline rush ... On, and on.

But the wonderful thing about those beta blockers was, once they kicked in, the adrenaline was stilled. That's what beta blockers do — they just block adrenaline — and, so, however much my fretful mind would *try* to produce an adrenaline burst — and it really, really tried — it just couldn't.

As soon as I became absorbed by work, an hour would go by — and, when I got up to get a cup of tea, I would suddenly think, in wonder: "I have not felt anxious! My body has been still! I feel ... cosy! There are no terrible drugs sluicing around me *at all*!"

My husband was astonished. He'd spent the past 30 years with someone who was, essentially, an invalid after 6pm. A dead-eyed junkie, on an adrenaline comedown.

Now, he suddenly had someone who could communicate in more than just fatigued grunts, and was suddenly very excited about watching the entire works of Paul Thomas Anderson. ➡

Subject to availability. Selected stores only.

tu.co.uk Free Click & Collect. Delivery from £3.95.

Sainsbury's

My guide to a perfect day

1 Every day starts the night before
I know it is the greatest temptation on earth to stay up until 1am, doomscrolling/bingeing on Netflix/seeing what the hell Mr Casaubon will do next in *Middlemarch* — but, really, these things should be regarded in the same way we regard getting drunk: you really need to stop it by 10pm. Just as late-night drinking sets fire to tomorrow, late-night anything — other than sleep — will 100 per cent torch your Tuesday.

I have found the best way to stop myself doing this is to remind myself of a useful catchphrase, of my own invention: "Existentially, do the right thing at the right time." The right time to stay up until 1am, watching videos of a woman who makes Victorian-style petticoats and chemises, is not on a Tuesday, while I am still relatively fit, and have a job — which I will be clocking back into in roughly, hmmm, six hours.

No — it is when I am 86, riddled with arthritis, and on a morphine drip. At that point in time, that's all I'll be able to do. My whole life will be lying in bed, watching TV late at night. Best save those box sets until then.

2 Every hour before 9am is worth three hours after
Because the *true* gift of going to sleep early is that you suddenly unlock access to The Golden Kingdom: the day before 9am. Or, to give it its technical term, "The bit of the day before all the other people can come — and ruin it for you."

No one is going to email you before 9am. No one is going to call. Depending on what your work/childcare routine is like, these early hours are the *one time* of the day you can be absolutely on your own, and do whatever you please. Accessing the hours around dawn is like accessing a temporal loft extension — a sudden new space in a place you already live.

Given Moran's Second Rule of Days — "The later in the day, the more people get in the way" — this is the ideal time for you to do the things that immediately get sacrificed when Events occur: stretching, running, swimming, physio, weights. You know — all the "selfish" things keeping you out of a wheelchair. Remind yourself that these things are not a grim duty that "they" — doctors, judgmental personal trainers, Joe Wicks — are "making" you do: they are a splendid present to the you of 8pm tonight, who will momentarily gasp, "Shit! It's 8pm and I haven't done any exercise!" — then remember: you knocked it all off before Nick Grimshaw started his breakfast show on 6 Music. Well done you.

3 Remember: your moods might actually be in your arse
Today, does your partner seem very sexually unattractive? Today, does work seem particularly onerous and hateful? Today, does the world seem *specifically* engineered to get on your tits? Right into the ducts?

Of course, all these things can, and do, happen, simply because other people are suboptimal, or dreadful.

But what I have noticed for myself is that, very often, when I *think* I am having an emotion about an outside element, what I'm *actually* having, on further examination, is a Sad Body Moment. I feel bloated; I feel fat; I feel tired. I feel sad about my hair. My leg hurts. My trousers are digging into my crotch. My arse feels spongy. Basically, I've eaten like shit, I haven't done any exercise, I'm due a hair wash, and/or I'm knackered.

Over the years, I've realised that, before I suggest divorce, resign from a job, or literally attempt to go and live on a farm on a remote mountainside in Wales, it's always best to wash my hair, go for a walk, eat some salad, and have a nap — and then see how I feel. I have been constantly amazed at how attractive my husband has suddenly become — within 40 minutes or less — after I've been for a brisk swim. I don't know how he does it.

4 Daily tiny improvements, or: releasing serotonin by hoovering the cutlery drawer
As one goes through life, one's idea of what would constitute a shameful, bathetic or risky confession radically changes.

When I was in my early twenties, I would have found it very, very difficult to admit to the sex dream I had about Tony Blair on the night he won the 1997 election. I once told my sister, and when I got to the phrase "so hard my head slipped between the mattress and the headboard", she silently put the phone down.

Now, at the age of 51, I hesitate to share how profoundly excited I get when I remember that, today, I hoovered out the cutlery drawer, instead.

But! What a thrill! Yesterday, that drawer was a revolting mausoleum for remnants of fishfinger crumb; stray, fossilised peas; the odd, dead fly.

Tomorrow? When I go down and select my breakfast spoon, for my yoghurt? Why, I will be looking down on a shiny, orderly wonderland of knife, fork and spoonage — all as pristine and sterile as the instrument cupboard of a hospital. *I can pretend I'm in a classy Airbnb.*

The day I discover I have ADHD and life finally makes sense

My therapist suggests I might have
ADHD, which is nice: as someone into wild swimming who loves David Bowie, shops in Uniqlo and owns a cockapoo, it is satisfying to see I have completed the entire "absolutely average 21st-century middle-aged woman bingo card".

As is typical for someone who might have ADHD, I couldn't be arsed to get a formal diagnosis — too *faffy* — but this literally gave me pause for thought. Because: I am always having a *lot* of thoughts.

For instance, if one of my daughters came to hug me, I would hug them right back — *of course*! — but immediately inquire, "So — are you hungry? When did you last eat? I've got some pasta sauce in the fridge, I think." Then immediately leap up to check.

Or if I were on a walk, and saw a particularly lovely tree, I would instantly follow the pleased thought of "That's pretty!" with, "I wonder what it looks like in winter? Would it look good in my garden? Maybe I should get one. Is it climate change-proof? I must come back and visit it in all four seasons, to see how it fares. Or, perhaps, visit an arboretum — and look at many trees. Compare them all. *I have always wanted to go to Westonbirt*!"

All while still walking past it, at a brisk clip.

I started, now, to understand what my therapist meant. Perhaps I *wasn't* allowing space for emotions. Perhaps I *wasn't* noticing them, when they first flickered into life — before immediately squashing them, with a million, more prosaic, thoughts, instead.

And, so, the next time one of my daughters came to hug me, I made a conscious decision. I was going to be, to my mind, a *worse* mother. She put her arms around me, I put my arms around her — and then, I *didn't* ask if she was hungry. I *didn't* try to "make things even better".

I just tightened my arms around her, and sniffed the top of her head. Underneath all the hairspray, and shampoo, I could still smell the ghost of the baby she once was. She, too, tightened her arms around me, paused — then emitted a huge sigh, and melted.

"This is *nice*," she said, nestling her head into my shoulder. "You're a nice mummy." And: there it was. From a ➡

Subject to availability. Selected stores only.

tu.co.uk Free Click & Collect. Delivery from £3.95.

Sainsbury's

tiny flicker of happiness — that I would previously have quashed with inquiry, and service — a sudden *whooomph*, like a burner igniting, and: true, deep joy. Followed by, of course, crying.

"Why are you crying, Mum?" she asked, when the first tears hit her centre parting. "I'm just really, really happy being your mum. I feel *really happy* right now." Because I had *noticed* that something nice was happening — and then given it space to turn into something bigger. Like encouraging birds to the garden by making bird-places, I had encouraged happiness into my life by making happiness-places.

Happiness, I realised, is a thing that must be *done* over and over and over again. Like laundry. And sex. It's not a thing you *are* — it's a thing you *do*.

My ingenious happiness hack

When I was 13, I invented one of the worst things a human being has ever come up with: The Bath-Time Self-Hate.

At the end of every day, I would run a very hot bath, lock the door, undress, and step into the bath.

As I lowered myself into the scalding waters, that boringly common teenage sensation would hit me — intense self-loathing. "You are *fat*," I would begin, opening with a real banger. "Disgustingly fat. You are covered in stretch marks. One breast is vastly bigger than the other. Your skin is all blotchy. You have tiny eyes, like a mole. You are a virgin. You have no friends. Your life prospects are f***ing zero. Plus? Your voice is too loud; you're *lazy*; and your sexual fantasies are just *wrong*: no one should be getting aroused by entries in *The Usborne Book of the Supernatural*. You should *not* be sexually attracted to golems or ghouls."

By this point, I would be fully submerged in the water. The water was scaldingly, agonisingly hot because I was working a system: if the water is painful enough, it eventually stops you thinking. That was the second part of the system: using pain to stop the bad thoughts.

The first part of the system was, I thought, the clever bit: suppressing all my self-loathing thoughts during the day — and there were *maaaany* — and saving them all up for this. Now. The Bath-Time Self-Hate. Twenty minutes of unexpurgated self-loathing — a full-on naked flagellation — and then: back to suppressing everything for the remaining 23 hours and 50 minutes.

I felt it was modern. Streamlined. *Efficient*. And I guess, in a way, it was.

But the other thing I thought about it was very wrong: that this was the best way, the most *viable* way, to feel a bit better about myself. Just a bit. At the age of 13, this was as near as I could get to being kind to myself.

I think about the Bath-Time Self-Hate quite a lot. Most nights, in fact. As I lower myself into my bath now, as an adult, it often haunts me.

If you had a rough childhood, as you get older, you often start to feel an overwhelming sadness and empathy for your younger self — almost as if your childhood self were one of your own children that needed rescuing. Your 20th-century self calls out to your 21st. And you call back. You talk to them.

When I talk back to mine, I know what would please her most. She doesn't actually want *sympathy* — she finds sympathy revolting. Icky. Too weird.

What she's *actually* desperate for is acknowledgement of how clever she is — how she's really trying to solve problems, and work things out — and, here, I can help her. Because, even though it's emotionally ghastly, the Bath-Time Self-Hate is *almost* a good idea. I was *almost* right. Constantly reviewing and evaluating yourself during the day is often impractical, or impossible. Saving up all your thoughts about yourself for one, specific slot, at the end of the day, *is* a good idea. But, obviously, there should be one, very fundamental, difference.

Roughly five years ago, I realised just how constantly desperate I am for praise. I know, I know — it's embarrassing that the person who chose a career where they are constantly seeking public approval only realised this in their forties.

I don't want praise for *who I am*, though — if you say something nice about me, I will become profoundly uncomfortable. I will run away. This is because I received no experience of this ever happening as a child. Don't worry. I've done the therapy.

No — the praise *I* want is for things I have *done*. Things made. Advices given. Situations dealt with. Problems solved. That is my Love Language: service.

And I now also know, at the age of 51, that this need is so chronic, it is wearying to other people. It's a well that can never be filled. There's *only* so many times your husband and children can gasp in awe, then shout, "I cannot believe you paid the council tax *again*! You're a f***ing *hero*!"

Also, if I'm being honest, I am so *consistently* efficient, productive and useful that no one has *time* to fully list my daily achievements. I am removing fluff-balls from behind doors no one else is ever viewing. I have changed filters other people don't know exist. I am solving potential financial crises in 2047, simply by filing the right document in the right place.

So, obviously, *someone* should be acknowledging all these small, practical brilliances. Someone should be praising me. But who?

Me. *Obviously* me. *Obviously* I am the person who is going to solve the problem of me needing praise for solving problems. I am my own cavalry. A self-facilitating self-praise node. If you want something doing, ask a busy woman. And this includes "getting that busy woman to be the only person to acknowledge just how busy that busy woman is".

And so now, every night, when I'm getting into the bath, I have a modern, healthy twist on the Bath-Time Self-Hate. As a happy adult, the Bath-Time Self-Hate has now been taken over by a new service: the Recitation of the Triumphs.

Simply put, the Recitation of the Triumphs is the review of each day. I run the bath, undress, lower myself in — then begin what is basically a cross between a rosary and a receipt of the day.

The point is to list *every single thing* you did that day. So that you might acknowledge why you are so knackered, and your back hurts, *but also* that you were a hard-working and determined person who did get a lot of shit done.

I stick it all in there. Whatever it is. From the noble — "Gave brother money to buy house" — to the mundane — "Used tooth-whitening strips." Hung damp towel on back of chair? Signed for parcel? In it goes. On and on. Until I get to the end — the last thing — which is always, of course, "Got in bath, and did the list." ■

How to Be Hopeful *by Caitlin Moran (Ebury Press, £22) is published on Thursday. Order from timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935. Caitlin is on tour from September 13 (gigantic.com)*

Don't miss a second extract in The Times on Monday

HAIR: LEWIS PALLETT AT EIGHTEEN MANAGEMENT. MAKE-UP: JULIA WREN USING CLARINS. DRESS, HOLLANDCOOPER.COM

Vincent van Gogh © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / Patrice Schmidt

It takes time to become an icon,

when you are different.

bedrinkaware.co.uk

‘YOU FEEL THE TICK OF TIME AT 73, BUT I’VE BEEN BLESSED WITH GOOD GENES’

Forever associated with his smooth turns as James Bond and Thomas Crown — as well as some unforgettable singing in Mamma Mia! — Pierce Brosnan is relishing a different kind of role, as the ‘psycho’ kingpin in MobLand. Helena de Bertodano meets him at home in Malibu

Pierce Brosnan with his MobLand co-star Helen Mirren, 81, and, opposite, at the GQ Men of the Year awards, 2025

Pierce Brosnan is in a fluster. And it is my fault. We are in the palatial living room of his beautiful Malibu home, overlooking the ocean. He has just handed me a crystal glass of water and I am about to put it down but hesitate, concerned that I will damage the polished burlwood table. "Should I use a coaster?" I ask him. He leaps to his feet, putting his own glass directly on the table as he does so. "A coaster," he says, searching wildly around the room. "There used to be coasters..."

After spinning round a few times, while I implore him not to bother, he sits back down, sinking his head into his hands in mock despair: "I'm so sorry, Helena. You're a lady from the Cotswolds and you're stuck here with this kind of born-in-a-barn Irishman who doesn't even have coasters."

Of all the ways I can think of describing Brosnan, this is not one of them. Irish, yes, but he looks like he was born in a Savile Row suit. He exudes a cultivated charm that combines good manners (addressing me by name, finding out where I grew up — hence the Cotswolds comment) with self-deprecation. "If he can act, he's my guy," Bond producer Cubby Broccoli famously said on first crossing paths with Brosnan, noting not just his good looks but also his easy charisma.

Hailed as "the Cary Grant of the Eighties", he made his name as the devilishly handsome TV detective Remington Steele; from there it was a natural step to 007. By 2001, he was tagged the Sexiest Man Alive by People magazine. It was an image he leant into, most memorably as the debonair art thief in the remake of *The Thomas Crown Affair*. "I love art and I wanted to steal art," he explains. He even rocked a suit on the beach in the *Mamma Mia!* films as the dashing Sam Carmichael, a role that brought him a new generation of fans. Now starring as a ruthless mob boss in the TV show *MobLand*, which returns for a second series this month, his look is still suave: think old-money Irish country gentleman, albeit one who happens to run a criminal empire.

Today, while Los Angeles swelters in late-summer heat, he manages to look elegant in a short-sleeved pressed cream shirt and loose-fitting slacks. "I was in something much more creased and shorts, but my wife [Keely Shaye, whom he married 25 years ago] said, 'Put on a clean shirt,' so I found this and I hope it's OK. It looks Ian Fleming-ish.

"I'm a bit of a clothes horse," he continues. "I like dressing up. I love style and elegance. I recently went to London for a week to do a Burberry commercial: you'll see me swanning around come Christmas time in Burberry, looking my natural best."

He speaks loquaciously in a soft Irish burr, his accent more pronounced than I had expected. Much of what he says is tongue-in-cheek but he is also thoughtful, choosing his words carefully, his sentences rarely trailing off.

His home, set behind ornate teak gates, is like a James Bond fever dream. Vast and opulent, the living room features throne-like chairs in cream and gold, and sofas with plush plum cushions. "Keely did all this," Brosnan says, waving an arm around. "This kind of French nouveau or whatever it's called." Downstairs is a spa and home cinema. Colourful art, including a painting by Damian Elwes, lines the walls, mixed with portraits of the two sons he shares with Keely: Dylan, 29, and Paris, 25.

We sit first on the sofas, at his suggestion, but Brosnan is fidgety. "Let's sit at the table," he suggests. "It's a lovely place to draw." He brings over a pad of paper and starts sketching as we chat, mostly a series of wiggles and lines. "This works a treat," he says, much more relaxed. "Here you go," he says, pulling a page out of his notepad. "This will make you happy: you can put that under your glass."

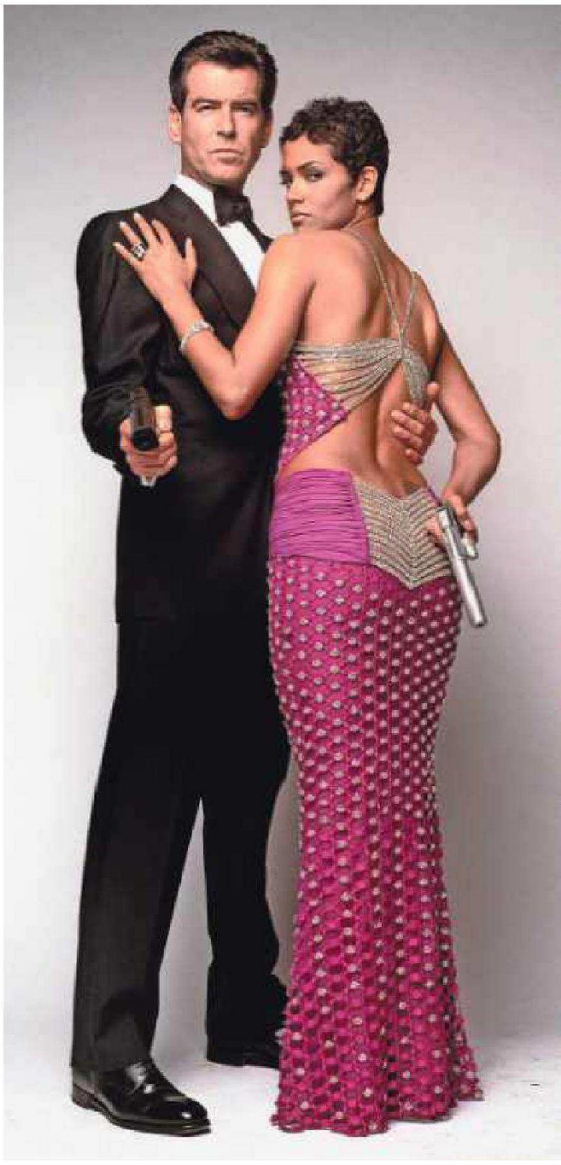
There is no faux modesty about his looks, which, even at 73, are still impressive. "I've been defined by this visage," he says. "I have nothing but gratitude for the Celtic alchemy that was bestowed upon me.

"So far, so good. Long may it last. It will creep up on me. You can feel the tick of time at 73. But I've been blessed with good genes."

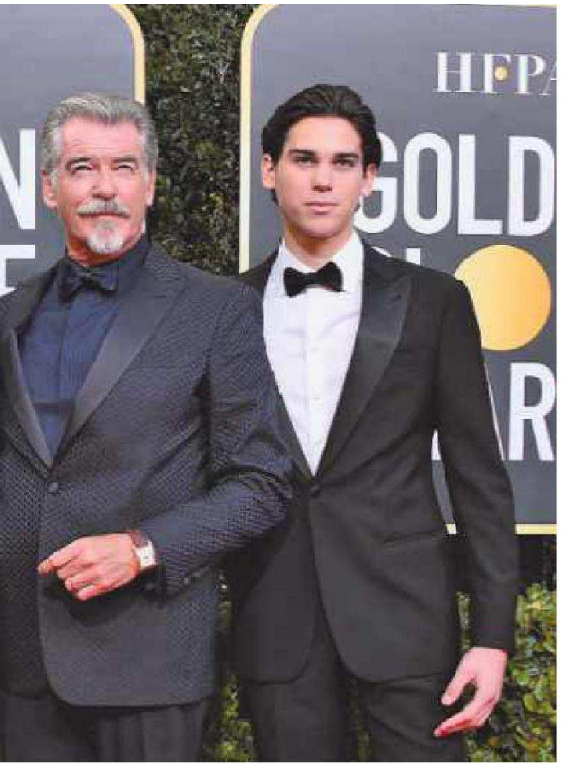
His visage, as he puts it, was a passport out of a rackety childhood in Navan near Dublin. He barely knew his father, Tom, a carpenter, who left when his son was two. A couple of years later his mother, May, a nurse, moved to London to work and he was placed first with relatives, then in a boarding house. "It was a solitary childhood. The dream was to be with my mother." He saw her just once a year and missed her hugely. "Within the passages of longing and separation and goodbyes you create an interior life for yourself." After an unhappy spell at a Christian Brothers' school, "later held up as an example of abuse to children", he moved to England, aged 11, to join his mother and her new husband, "a sweet, kind man". He attended a Putney comprehensive: "I was as green as the grass. They nicknamed me 'Irish'; I wore that as a badge of identity." Now 94, his mother lives in Wimbledon, "in a house I bought in another life". They remain very close. "I will see her this weekend."

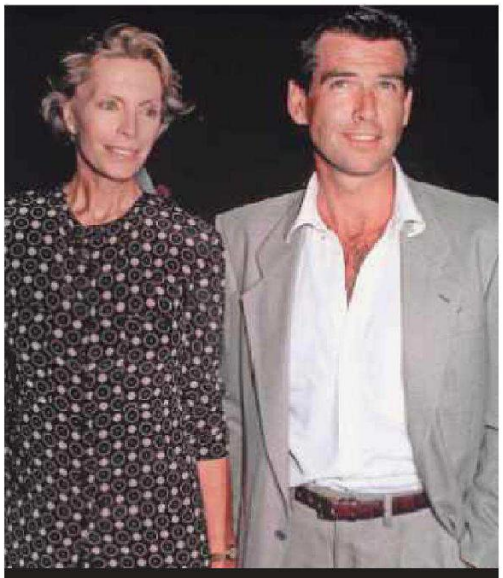
Leaving school at 16 with two CSEs in art and English, he found work as a commercial artist before training as an actor at the Drama Centre London. "I knew I had something: talent and a

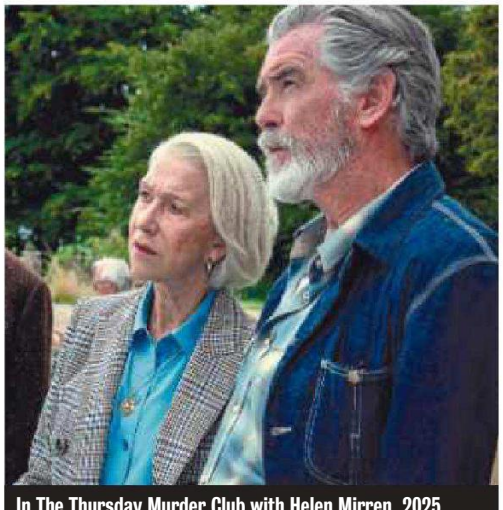
At the 2020 Golden Globes with wife Keely and sons Dylan and Paris. Below: as 007 with Halle Berry in Die Another Day, 2002



PREVIOUS SPREAD: GETTY IMAGES. THIS SPREAD: GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY




With his late first wife, Cassandra Harris, circa 1990


In The Thursday Murder Club with Helen Mirren, 2025

‘IT’S SO DELIGHTFUL TO SEE MYSELF AS THIS GNARLY, CRAZY, DESPERATE MAN’

certain look that worked on film. And I had an inner life and strength of character to be able to traverse those waters, should I get what I wanted.”

What he wanted was to be a famous actor. His quiet confidence and good looks soon earned him stage roles and brief appearances in films such as *The Long Good Friday* (1980). By then he had met his first wife, the actress Cassandra Harris, who appeared as a Bond girl in *For Your Eyes Only*. Nearly five years older than him, she had two young children. “Not having had a family or been part of a family, I could understand my desire and my comfort within that lifestyle ... Being fatherless and then being a father is quite a task at times, but I enjoy it. I’ve been a father all my [adult] life.”

They had a son together, Sean, now 42. Harris came up with the idea of moving to Los Angeles, remortgaging their house in Wimbledon to do so. The move was the making of Brosnan, who quickly secured the title role in *Remington Steele*. “It was Cassie who gave me the strength to come to America,” he says. “She was so bold.”

Her death from ovarian cancer, aged 43, left him a widower at just 38. His stepdaughter, Charlotte, would later die of the same disease. “It took a while to heal,” he says quietly. “They are still in my soul, in my heart. I talk to them.”

The difficulties of his life — his tough childhood and what he describes as “the sorrow of loves that have passed” — give Brosnan a hinterland that serves him well as an actor, especially in recent years, where he has branched out into character roles. He brought real poignancy to his interpretation of the boxing trainer Brendan Ingle in *Giant* (2025), almost unrecognisable with his prosthetic broken nose and bald cap. Then he appeared bearded, even — unthinkably — sartorially challenged, as former trade union leader Ron in *The Thursday Murder Club* (2025); in *The Last Rifleman* (2023), he starred as a 92-year-old Second World War veteran. “I’ve broken the chalice of myself, as it were,” he says, sounding relieved to finally earn roles that do not hinge principally on his looks. “I’m now playing the older man, the wiser man.” He has just returned from Australia, where he was shooting *Extraction 3* with Chris Hemsworth, playing his father.

And now, in *MobLand*, he stars as the terrifying Irish kingpin Conrad Harrigan — or, as his character puts it, “I’m Conrad the dread 100 f***ing guns Harrigan.” The first series ends with him in prison, goading his enemies to “bring it on”. In the second series, he becomes increasingly unhinged. “Stark staring bonkers berserk,” as one character puts it.

Brosnan chuckles. “Last night, we watched episodes 1-4 [of series 2] with the boys and their girlfriends. Keely was holding my hand. And then [he pauses for effect] she unheld my hand.”

Unlike Bond or Thomas Crown, where he played a version of himself, now he really has to prove his mettle as an actor. “It’s so delightful to see myself as this gnarly, mangled, lost, crazy, desperate man.”

Could he relate to anything in the character? He laughs incredulously. “I have nothing in common with this psycho. I had to jump off a cliff with it. [But] I think definitely we are all capable of doing something that is outwardly not a good thing to do.”

What’s the worst thing he’s ever done? “What the heck?” he splutters, but plays along. “I can bend the truth. Exaggerate.”

Hmm, hardly Conrad-worthy. Has he ever had a prima donna moment: flounced off set, perhaps? “No, I don’t believe in that shit. I mean, it can be frustrating at times. Certain people can really just bend your patience ... If I really let it go, then Conrad is pretty close: you’ll feel it. I bite my tongue, go away and have a cup of tea and a McVitie’s ...”

In a family context too he says he can occasionally lose his rag. “I can bark. But I’m not very good with arguments. I’m always the first to apologise. I hate [a bad] atmosphere.”

Conrad’s only redeeming feature, Brosnan says, is “his love of Maeve”, played by Helen Mirren, who, if anything, is more savage than him. “He knows he’s being manipulated by her. And he allows it. I look at her and I just think, ‘You wicked woman!’”

We ponder whether there are shades of Donald Trump in Conrad. Brosnan thinks not. “It’s more Jacobean tragedy, Shakespearean, the king in his domain. It’s quite hilarious, a medieval humour — barbaric and chaotic.”

Not that he is a fan of Trump. “He has the bit between his teeth ... I love America. And it saddens me what is happening to this great nation and the repercussions for my children and grandchildren.”

He felt more hopeful during the Biden years. “It wasn’t as dark. There’s a heaviness now to society, culture and the restrictions that have been put on us — creatively, philosophically, spiritually, emotionally.”

He is equally withering about Gavin Newsom, the California governor and possible presidential candidate. “He’s a slippery kind of fellow.” ➡

Indeed, the only topic he shows some reluctance to discuss is James Bond. He has not watched his Bond films since their release, not even with his sons.

"I have no desire to see myself in Bond. I'm just a member of the audience now awaiting the next Bond and wishing him well. There are lots of good hats in the ring. Lots of great actors. I see it. I follow it. They could probably just go left-field and pick someone that none of us know about."

For example? He backs off fast. "I wouldn't pick anyone. My wife told me not to say anything and I've said too much. Because once I say something it goes [everywhere] and I get hanged."

He is more relaxed talking about the new *Thomas Crown Affair* with Michael B Jordan, due for release in March. "He's a stellar actor. He reached out to me to join him in some scene at an airport with fancy planes. I would have done it but the schedule didn't permit it. I think it's one of those roles that should be passed on, like playing Hamlet."

Likewise with *Mamma Mia!*, a role he would happily reprise. "I think we all would love to do another *Mamma Mia!*. I think Meryl would. Colin. Everyone. It's definitely the gift that keeps giving. A new audience. A little button of a child gave me a high-five the other day. Her grandmother said she loved me as Sam Carmichael. I said, 'Shall I start singing?'"

Well aware that his singing was mocked in some quarters, he takes it in good part. "In James Bond, I was jumping off cliffs and hanging on wires and going through fire. But the singing was the most terrifying thing I've ever done. The only thing that comforted me was to see Colin Firth and Stellan Skarsgard in equal terror."

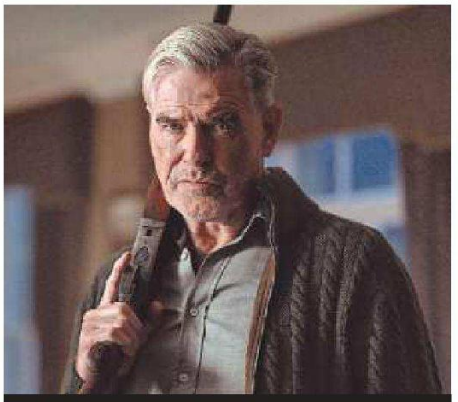
His career may look effortless, but he says he has experienced fallow periods. "There have been doldrums. I have this beautiful house in Malibu. I have to pay the mortgage. There are school fees. There are definite moments of, oh, this boat is not quite sinking, but [it might] if we don't get a job soon."

So he has taken on the occasional turkey. "Not many. But you make peace with that. You make the commitment because you need the money, then you show up on time and do good work."

When not working, he divides his time between Malibu and Kauai, where he has a second home, "a little three-bedroom cottage at the end of the road. We have our own chickens and I have a yurt, where I paint." He starts mocking himself: "I have a yurt in Africa," he says, impersonating Meryl Streep.

They are thinking of selling their Malibu home. "We've been spared by the fires a few times now. But I think it's time to move. Everything changes; everything falls apart." He gestures towards the ocean, serenely twinkling in front of us. "We live by this body of earth's water on a fault in a ring of earthquakes. That creates a fear."

'I WOULD LOVE TO DO ANOTHER MAMMA MIA! — IT'S THE GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING'



As Conrad Harrigan in the new series of MobLand

LUKE VARLEY/PARAMOUNT+

His life, he says, is not especially glamorous. "I think the two of us are somewhat reclusive. It's a long way into town. We have a small circle of friends here [but] people get divorced, they die, they move on. And we're still here."

He waxes lyrical about Keely, "a powerhouse of a woman". They met at a charity event in Mexico in 1994, where she was working as a journalist. "I was with my son Sean, who was nine. I'd been in my widowhood for a number of years, bumping into the furniture here and there, trying to figure life out."

They coincided early one morning at the swimming pool. "My son was playing with his He-Man toy and this lovely lady walked around the corner. I looked over my shoulder and looked again." He jokes about trying to keep his attention on his son: "That's very good, son. Mind yourself; don't slip." Then suddenly she was in front of him. "She put out her hand and said, 'Hi, I'm Keely.' And I said, 'Hello, I'm Pierce.' That was it. That night we madly sat up until about three in the morning." The next morning they had breakfast together by the sea. "Big waves. She said, 'I'm going to go for a swim.' I said, 'I'm OK.' She walked away in her lovely bikini. And Sean said, 'You're so chicken, Dad.' 'Just be quiet, I'm going to go for a swim.' So I went out and the waves are beating me down and I'm trying to get above the waves, trying to look cool. And she said, 'Go under the wave.' I finally [reached her] and she was topless and [I thought], 'My God!'"

He says that he's still scared of the sea. "I'm like an Irish-Jewish grandmother. I go into the water but I don't go into the waves."

Now, 32 years on, they are seen as one of the most solid couples in Hollywood. "We like each other, challenge each other." Do they argue? "We bicker. The biggest thing is [that] I bring sand into the house. I quickly get the broom and sweep it all out and say, 'Hello. Cup of tea? It wasn't me, it was him ...'" He nods towards his son Dylan who, as we speak, is crossing the beach in front of the window.

He insists he likes to pull his weight around the house. "I take out the trash. I empty the dishwasher. I do the laundry. I let Keely do the cooking. She is a great cook. I'm a one-trick-pony kind of guy."

What is his one trick? "Coconut fish. I do it in breadcrumbs."

He makes a conscious effort to eat well and keep fit. "Keely keeps me on track. I walk away from some of the great stuff in life: the cocktails or the beer. I stay away from the bread and the butter and the pasta. And I exercise: I walk the beach, go swimming, ride the bike, play tennis."

Apart from anything else, he says, he still wants to be considered as a romantic lead. "I'd like to have a crack at one more love story. I'd like to take the Thomas Crown and James Bond characters, that persona I've created for myself, and find another role like that, maybe as a private detective. I love romance." Who would he choose as a co-star? "Oh, heavens. There are so many. Jessica Chastain comes to mind. She's a brilliant, beautiful actress, so smart, bright, alive."

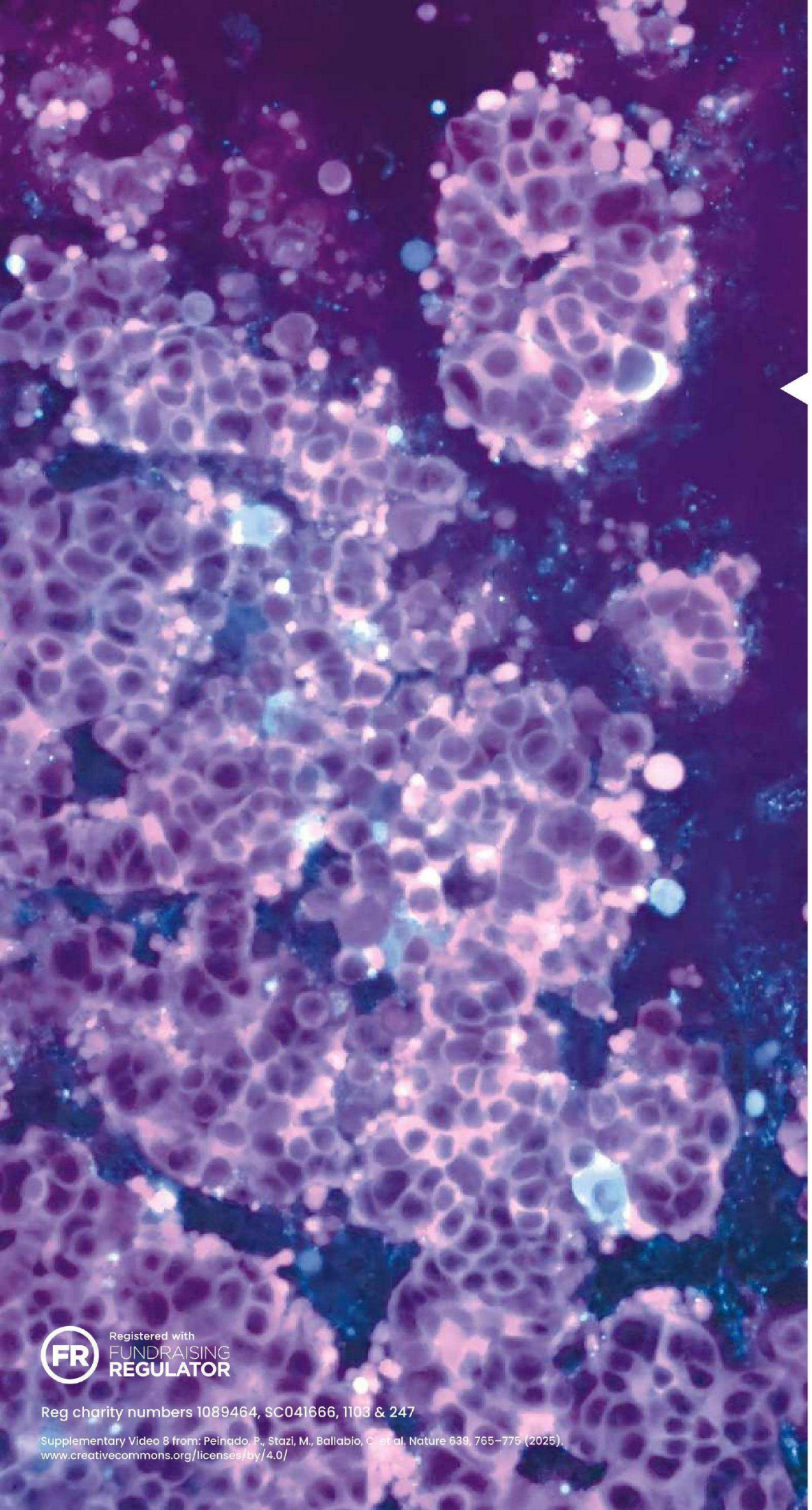
A third season of *MobLand* is also in the works. "I'm wondering how long I stay alive [as Conrad]. I've seen a few people disappear. Should I be calling up my agents and looking for employment?"

We walk outside to his art studio, which he has set up in the garage. It displaces his black BMW, which sits in the driveway. An electrical fire destroyed the iconic Aston Martin V12 Vanquish that was a trophy from his final Bond film, *Die Another Day* (2002). "We came home from a meditation session one night and flames were leaping out of the garage."

His studio is full of bright canvases, including a very familiar-looking painting by the door. It is a copy of Paul Gauguin's *Red Dog*. "Someone said you should think about painting an artist that you love. This painting is actually in the living room, and it's one of the reproductions from *The Thomas Crown Affair*, of which we have a few. I love this painting so I thought I'd have a crack at it. The thing is, it's just taken me for ever to paint."

It doesn't really occur to me until later quite how meta this is: a fake of a fake sitting in Pierce Brosnan's driveway. Life imitating art imitating art. Thomas Crown would be proud of him. ■

Series two of MobLand *begins on Paramount+ on September 18*



Make our next cancer breakthrough your legacy.

Our researchers are pioneering a urine test that could detect lung cancer earlier than ever before. A life-saving head start for future generations, supported by gifts left in Wills.

Gifts in Wills fund over a third of our work to beat cancer.

Find out more:
cruk.org/giftsinwills

CANCER RESEARCH UK

Together we are beating cancer

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Reg charity numbers 1089464, SC041666, 1103 & 247

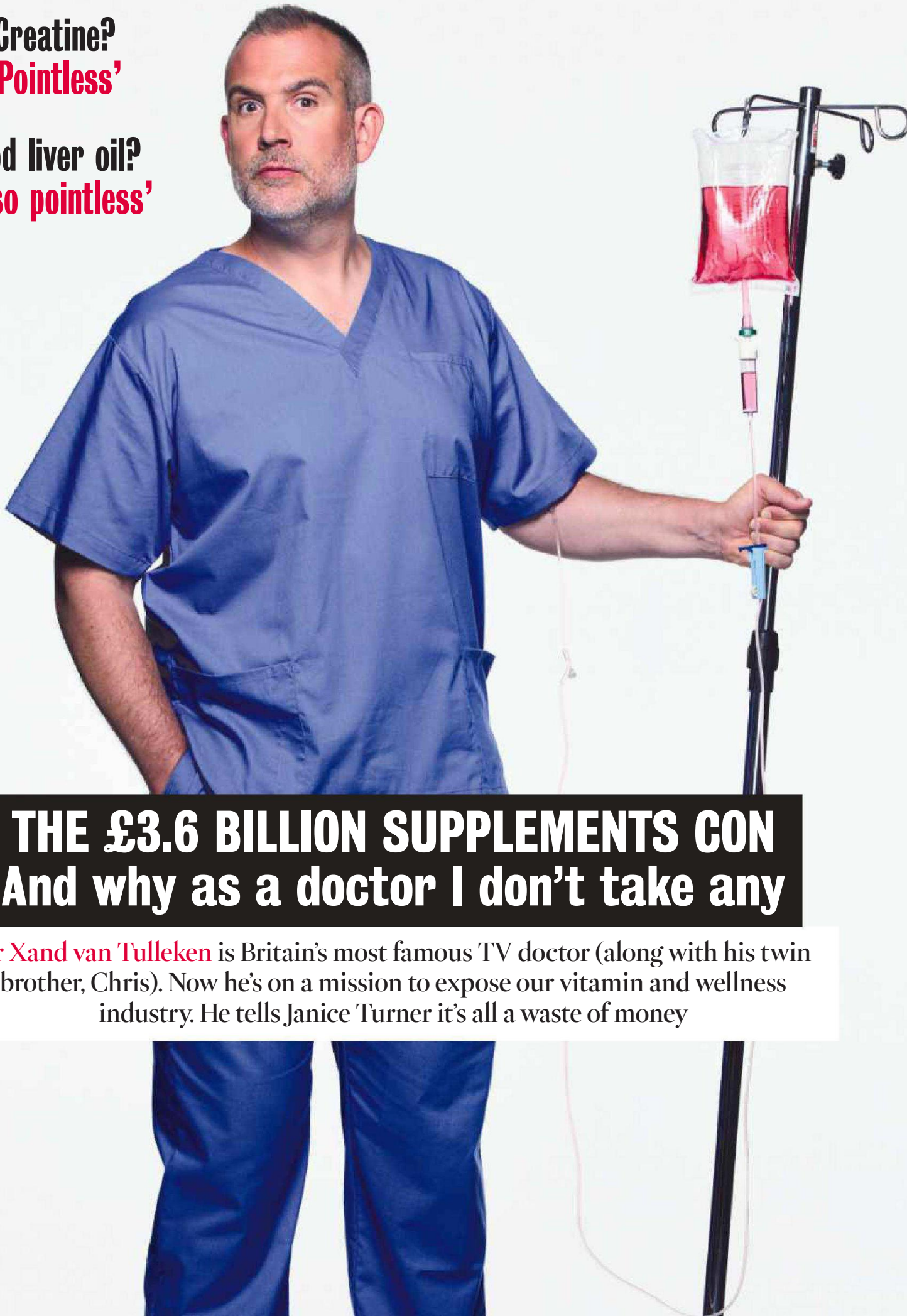
Supplementary Video 8 from: Peinado, P., Stazi, M., Ballabio, C. et al. Nature 639, 765–775 (2025).

www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Xand van Tulleken, 48, photographed by Robert Wilson. Styling: Prue White

Creatine?
'Pointless'

Cod liver oil?
'Also pointless'



THE £3.6 BILLION SUPPLEMENTS CON
And why as a doctor I don't take any

Dr Xand van Tulleken is Britain's most famous TV doctor (along with his twin brother, Chris). Now he's on a mission to expose our vitamin and wellness industry. He tells Janice Turner it's all a waste of money

Before meeting Xand van Tulleken, I gather up all my supplements and health potions, products I've bought in the belief they'll make me feel better or look a bit younger. There's a calcium + vitamin D pill (for bones), cod liver oil capsules (the universal panacea), a jar of collagen (for perkier skin), creatine powder (fitness), ferrous sulphate (for my low iron levels) and the fizzy vitamin C + zinc tablets my husband believes ward off colds.

I lay them out on the conference room table at University College London where Van Tulleken, an honorary associate professor, bounces in with his Tiggerish energy. The annual UK supplement market is worth £3.6 billion, more than £50 per person, and most of us have a similar collection of pills which, while not clinically approved drugs, promise that illusive modern nirvana: "wellness". But Van Tulleken, having interrogated the evidence and witnessed how they are produced for his new book, *Make Me Well*, believes we're all wasting our money.

"Hah!" he says, first seizing the collagen, £28.99 and flogged by a bevy of "brand ambassadors". "So this should work. Collagen is the most abundant protein in the body. And the reason we look and feel worse as we get older is a huge amount due to our collagen decaying." Manufacturers, he says, seize upon research that shows feeding collagen to mice stimulates collagen production in their own skin. "Yet when you remove studies that are paid for by the industry, the effect vanishes."

Collagen is a waste product of meat: the jelly produced when connective tissue like hooves or bones are boiled. (It's why cold chicken soup wobbles.) It was long used as a cheap filler in food or to make acetate gels for lighting; then in the mid-Nineties, the Japanese cosmetics company Shiseido processed it into a powder, which promised "beauty from within". A 2,000 per cent mark-up: waste turned into gold. Now the world's biggest meat corporation, JBS Foods, has its own collagen division.

"Every stage of collagen production is a con," Van Tulleken says. While most is made from cattle, the most expensive and sought-after, ejiao, is rendered from donkey skins in China. The problem was this rapidly industrialising nation went from owning 11 million donkeys in 1992 to fewer than 1 million by 2020. Thus began the theft and export of African donkeys, valuable beasts of burden that spare (mainly) women and girls from hard labour. In 2024, the African Union had to ban the slaughter of donkeys for their skin.

In China, Van Tulleken visited the strange, space-age, state-owned ejiao factory, "which has caused a huge amount of suffering, deforestation and child labour". So are those marketing collagen just classic snake-oil salesmen? "I think lots of people selling it, including doctors, believe it works," he says. "But I don't."

With his twin, Chris van Tulleken, right

'When you remove studies that are paid for by the brands, the collagen effect vanishes'

Van Tulleken, 48, and his identical twin brother, Chris — younger by seven minutes — have spent much of their careers debunking fashionable ideas. In their BBC *What's Up Docs?* podcast, they argue that fears about microplastics are overstated, that we don't need eight hours' sleep a night or to drink gallons of water. Both serious medics — Chris specialising in infectious diseases, Xand in humanitarian aid and public health — they found fame in 2012 with their CBBC series *Operation Ouch!*, which explained medical phenomena from vaccines to farts and is one of the longest running kids' shows, winning two Baftas.

More recently, Chris's book *Ultra-Processed People*, which argues chemicals, sugar and salt added by manufacturers drive obesity and are calamitous for our health, sold a million copies. I ask Xand if there is pressure for him to equal that. He laughs and says that such is the twins' bond, "When Chris's book did well, I felt I'd done well. I felt like I'd written the book." Indeed, people queueing for Chris to sign their copy asked Xand instead. "I'd go, 'But I'm not him,' and they'd go, 'I don't care.' And Chris would say, 'Yes, fine, just forge one.'" With twins, Xand says, "People think, 'Oh, one's much the same as the other,' and it's true if you met Chris tomorrow, he would treat you in a much more familiar way, knowing that you'd met me."

Yet their closeness has not precluded such fierce, occasionally physical rows that the *Operation Ouch!* team had to invent a protocol: when tension built, the brothers had to leave the room and think nice thoughts about each other. Xand puts his rage with Chris down to self-loathing. "We've got the same strengths and the same weaknesses, and so the weaknesses are exaggerated but the strengths aren't multiplied. I really admire Chris. But the frustration of going, 'Oh, he doesn't know his lines either,' or, 'Oh, he's late as well,' is much more annoying than with any other co-presenter. When I'm annoyed at Chris, it's because I'm annoyed at me."

Now Van Tulleken picks up my bottle of calcium + vitamin D pills, something I'm led to believe is essential for women my age if we don't want to snap a hip. "The vitamin D chapter was the hardest one to write because it was the biggest loss of faith for me," he says. "When I was at medical school, it was so exciting. We thought it was going to cure everything." But when he dug into two decades of trials, he found no benefits from vitamin D supplements, except for a rare few people with a genuine deficiency. In fact, some studies suggest high vitamin D doses may reduce rather than improve bone density.

But what about calcium, which is thrust at menopausal women? "Your bones are built of calcium, so calcium should strengthen your bones. And yet the trial data says it does not." Besides, Van Tulleken says, "Everything is thrust at menopausal women." His book charts how late-Nineties scares that HRT increased risk of breast cancer led to a global

PREVIOUS SPREAD: GROOMING, ALICE THEOBALD AT ARLINGTON ARTISTS USING BENEFIT AND SUNDAY RILEY. SHIRT, HAWESANDCURTIS.CO.UK. TROUSERS, MRPORTER.COM. THIS PAGE: DAVID TITLOW

THE DOCTOR'S VIEW Van Tulleken's verdict on the wellness pills we love

Vitamin D
Perhaps no other area of medicine has been so completely overturned in my career. Two decades of trials show there is no benefit to taking a vitamin D supplement except for people with a genuine deficiency.

Multivitamins including vitamin C
The data say that vitamins and mineral supplements don't help healthy people. A large trial funded by the US National Institutes of Health published in 2022 found that a daily multivitamin does not significantly reduce the risk of cancer or cardiovascular disease, or reduce mortality. Other trials have failed to find any benefits to cognitive function. Large trials have found that multivitamin supplementation — including vitamin C — doesn't stop us getting colds.

Antioxidant supplements
Just because a drug seems like it should work, doesn't mean that it will. A team of scientists in Copenhagen University Hospital collected data from trials that covered almost a quarter of a million participants. It found that antioxidant supplements do not help you live longer. In fact, they found that taking vitamin A, beta-carotene and vitamin E could increase mortality.

Collagen
Once you strip out the industry-funded trials and the low-quality ones, the collagen effect disappears. I don't believe the hype. A 2025 study published in the American Journal of Medicine reported there is currently no clinical evidence to support that it prevents skin ageing.

Cod liver oil and krill oil
In the general population, fish oil supplementation seems to confer little benefit. A large 2024 Australian trial found that 2g of krill oil a day made no difference to knee osteoporosis.

Menopause supplements that contain vitamin B6 and zinc
It's easy to see how a fact about the role of a vitamin in your body could lead someone to believe that taking it might give them more energy, or make them less tired, or fix their hormones, none of which is true. There's no evidence that taking a supplement containing B6 or zinc will lead to more energy or balance hormones in a menopausal woman. Some supplements contain over 1,000 per cent more vitamin B6 than the UK recommended daily allowance of 1.2mg.

Black cohosh
Black cohosh has been implicated in many instances of acute liver injury. Although it's aimed at menopausal women and found in menopause supplements, 16 studies found "insufficient evidence" of its effectiveness.

Turmeric and curcumin
Many of the studies promoting turmeric don't hold up under scrutiny. The rise in popularity of turmeric and curcumin, its so-called "active ingredient", reflects a rise in reported cases of liver injury. It has also been found to interfere with the liver's metabolism of other drugs, potentially making them more toxic.

NADs and NMN
Although in animals, especially mice, the case for anti-ageing supplement NMN looks compelling, in humans it is far less convincing. Some small self-reported studies have suggested improvements in subjective fatigue, sleep quality or exercise capacity. None demonstrated reduced mortality, delayed onset of age-related disease, or extension of lifespan. There is no good reason to believe that NMN will do you any good at all.

Testosterone for men
The symptoms of low testosterone are excessive tiredness, weight gain, obesity, depression, poor memory, low libido and difficulty concentrating. On a bad day I can persuade myself I have all of these. Men are being oversold this hormone and most of them don't need it. It's far less effective than we're led to believe and the side-effects of testicular shrinkage, infertility and long-term dependence are very real problems. Testosterone therapy, however, genuinely helps men, especially for sexual dysfunction, if their own bodies aren't making enough.

Iron, B12 or magnesium
If you're prescribed iron because you're anaemic, or vitamin B12 because you're vegan, or magnesium if you have a heart condition, then it might be more helpful to think of what you're taking as a drug rather than a supplement: something given to solve a specific, identified problem. A supplement is only required if you are in fact iron deficient.

Creatine
We do seem to benefit in terms of sporting performance from eating more creatine, but it doesn't work for absolutely everyone.

Caffeine
Caffeine is probably the closest thing the supplement world has to a genuine success story. It improves sports performance for those who metabolise it quickly (about 50 per cent of us) and is linked with a reduced risk of heart attack. For the 14 per cent of people who metabolise it slowly, it will have the reverse effect.

plummet in prescriptions, with women turning instead to wellness supplements. These were not just expensive and of dubious benefit but some, containing ingredients like black cohosh (which can cause liver damage), are actually dangerous.

Researching menopause, he felt "upset" that the medical profession was "so complicit and responsible, both in driving women towards the wellness industry and then in continuing to exploit them as a population". He also queries a new medical narrative that women need HRT not just during their menopausal years but for life, as a magical elixir that can prevent everything from heart disease to Alzheimer's.

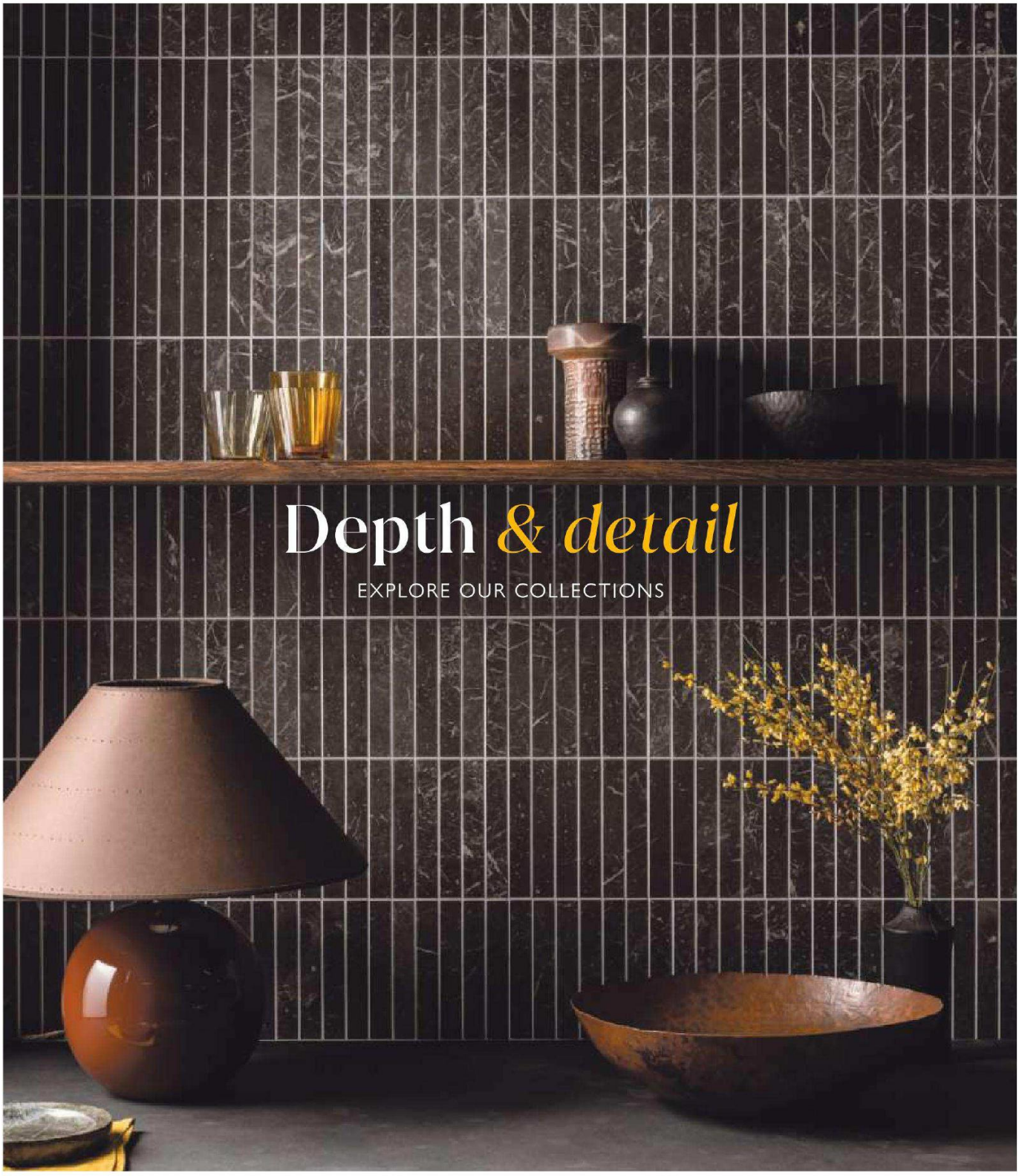
Lifelong patients are such fabulously lucrative customers, he says, that no one tells women the positives of being post-menopausal. Van Tulleken consulted his own mother, a publisher, who said, "'If you employ women, hold on to them, because after the menopause, they will do the best work they've ever done.' And my mum's career skyrocketed then."

The twins and their younger brother, Jonathan, a TV director, grew up in a comfortable west London family, their father an industrial designer. As teenagers, Xand and Chris made the joint decision to read medicine at Oxford so they could study together for A-levels. After graduating their paths divided, with Xand working in humanitarian relief. In Myanmar, in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis of 2008, he had a brief relationship with a Canadian aid worker. It wasn't serious and they parted amicably but, a few months later, she rang from Calgary to say she was pregnant.

A boy, Julian, was born, and Van Tulleken moved to New York, where he taught at Fordham University, so he could have a part in his son's life. His thirties were spent in constant transit between America, Canada, London (to film *Operation Ouch!*) and accompanying his students to Uganda and Nicaragua.

Continues on page 39

MANDARIN STONE



NATURAL STONE
PORCELAIN
& DECORATIVE TILES

mandarinstone.com

THE TIMES

Eat!

SPUDS U LIKE
EASY POTATO DISHES

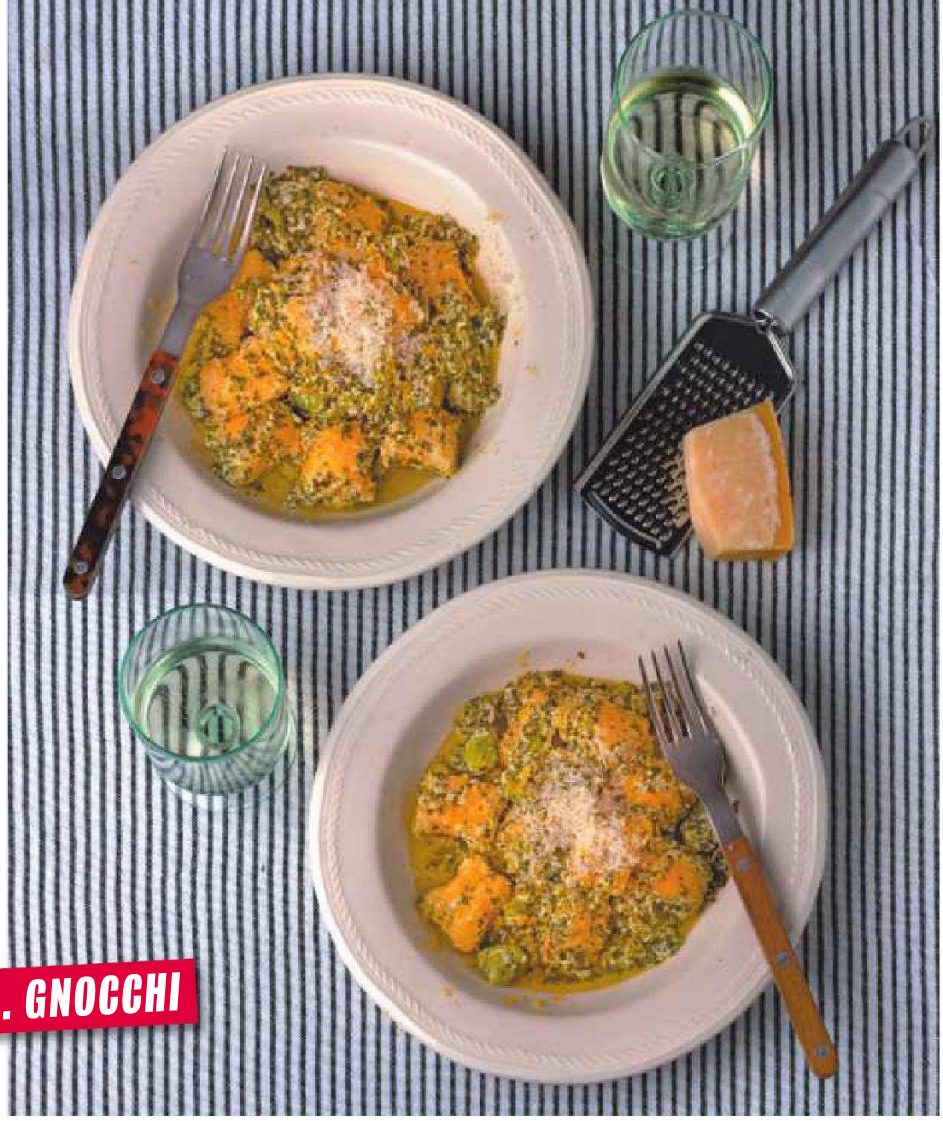
4-PAGE PULLOUT

Dauphinoise!

Hasselback!

Rösti!

Gnocchi!



1. GNOCCHI

2. DAUPHINOISE

People can be a bit down on the humble spud. Yes, potatoes are many people's ultimate comfort food, but you ignore the benefits of this nutrient-dense, antioxidant-rich ingredient (a good source of vitamin C and potassium) at your peril. Here are my favourite dishes. **Tony Turnbull**

1. GNOCCHI

Serves 4 as a main.
Total time: 1 hr 35 min

A great way to use up any leftover mashed potato, but if making from scratch it's best to bake rather than boil the potatoes. High-starch King Edwards dry out well when cooked, meaning you need minimal flour to bring the dough together. Serve with butter, sage and parmesan, pesto or seasonal veg, or your favourite pasta sauce.

- **1kg King Edward potatoes, unpeeled**
- **150-200g plain flour**
- **1 large egg yolk**

1. Bake the potatoes at 180C fan/gas 6 for 1 hour until tender. Scoop out the hot flesh and press immediately through a potato ricer or sieve onto a clean surface — releasing steam is crucial to avoid a soggy dough.

2. Sprinkle 150g flour and some salt over the cooled potatoes. Make a well and add the egg yolk, then gently bring together into a soft dough. Do not overknead. Add more flour only if necessary.
3. Cut or roll into ropes, then slice into 2cm pillows. Cook in boiling salted water, scooping out the gnocchi with a slotted spoon as they float to the surface. Serve immediately with your chosen sauce.

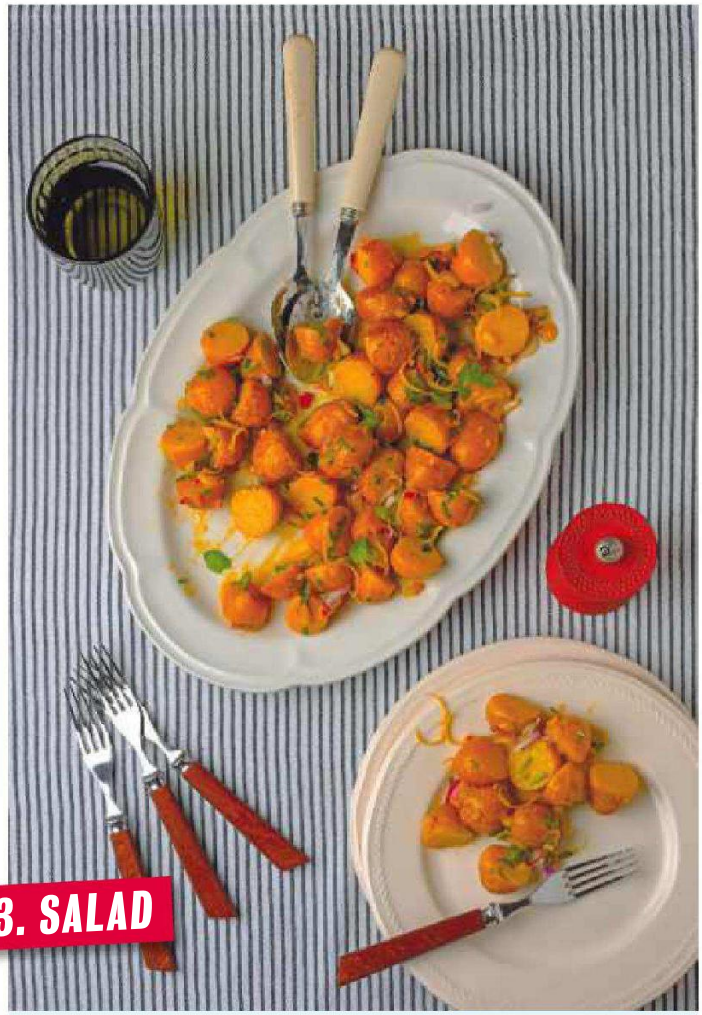
2. DAUPHINOISE

Serves 6. Total time: 1 hr 50 min

I like to serve this classic French dish with roast beef or lamb. A good floury potato like King Edward or Maris Piper releases just enough starch to turn the cream and milk into a thick, luxurious sauce.

- **300ml double cream**
- **300ml whole milk**
- **3 garlic cloves, bruised**
- **Pinch of fresh nutmeg**
- **Butter, for greasing**
- **1kg floury potatoes, sliced as thin as possible (ideally with a mandoline)**

1. Simmer the double cream, milk, garlic and nutmeg with salt and pepper in a saucepan for 10 min to steep the garlic flavour. Discard the garlic.



3. SALAD

RECIPES
Tony Turnbull
PHOTOGRAPHS
Romas Foord

‘DRESS THE POTATOES WHILE STILL WARM TO ABSORB MORE FLAVOUR’

2. Butter a shallow baking dish. Add the raw potato slices, seasoning lightly between layers. Pour over the cream mix until the potatoes are just submerged.
3. Bake at 140C fan/gas 3 for 75-90 min until golden on top and tender throughout.

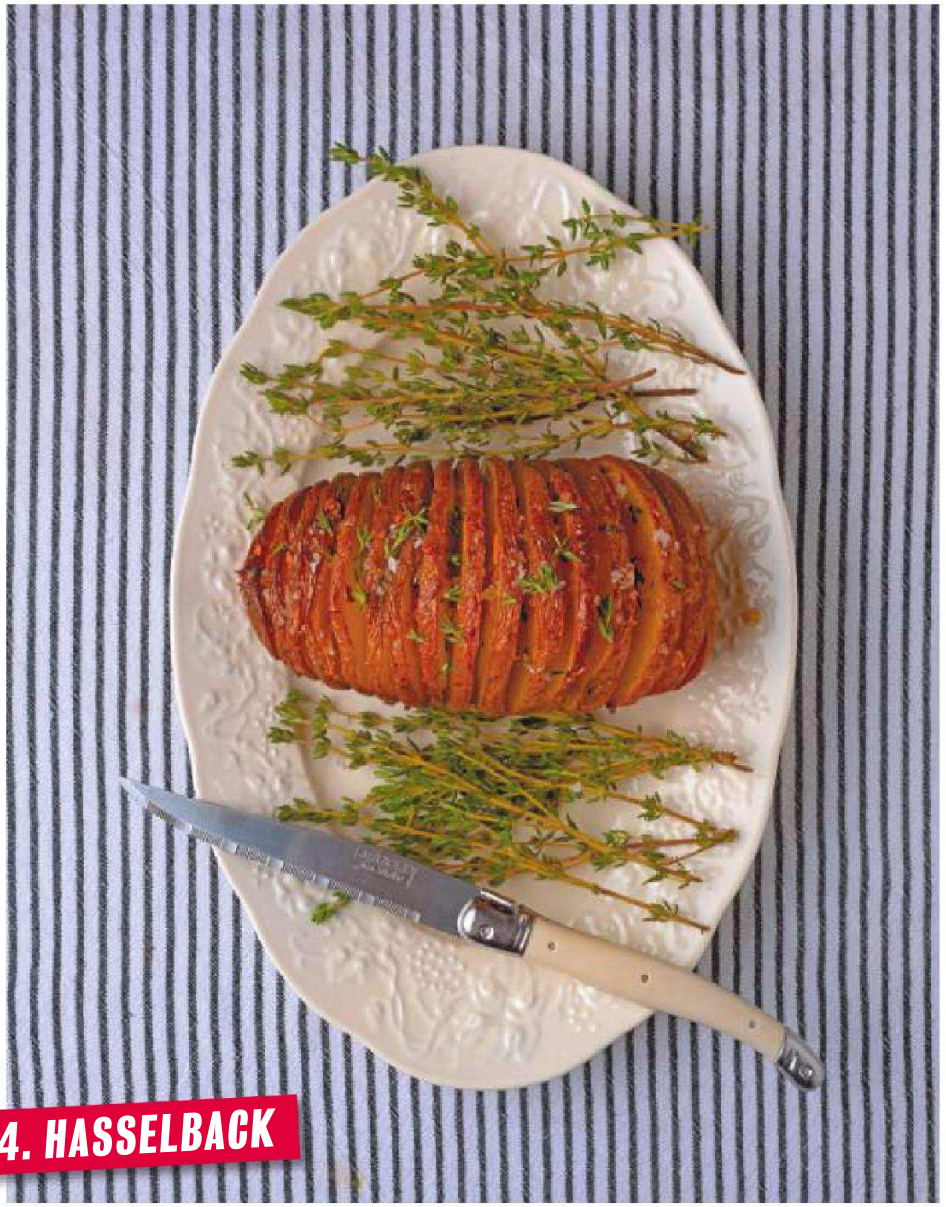
3. HERBY POTATO SALAD

Serves: 4-6. Total time: 35 min

I like tarragon, mint and chives, but you can use any combination of herbs you like. Make sure you dress the potatoes while still warm — they will absorb the flavour of the vinaigrette better.

- **1kg Charlotte or baby new potatoes**
- **2 tbsp Dijon mustard**
- **3 tbsp white wine vinegar**
- **1 shallot, finely diced**
- **80ml extra virgin olive oil**
- **Handful of fresh herbs, finely chopped**
- **1 lemon, zested**

1. Boil the potatoes whole in salted water until tender (about 15-20 min). Drain in a colander.
2. Whisk together the mustard, vinegar, shallot and olive oil and season well.
3. Cut the warm potatoes into bite-sized pieces and toss with the dressing. Fold in the fresh herbs and lemon zest just before serving warm or at room temperature.



4. HASSELBACK

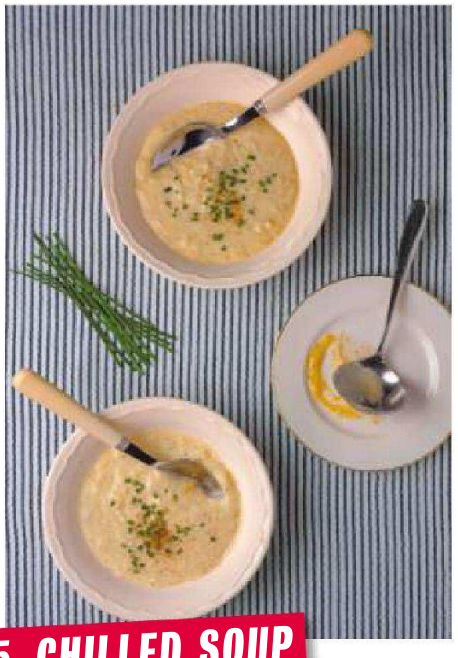
4. CRISPY GARLIC BUTTER HASSELBACK POTATOES

Serves: 4. Total time: 1 hr 15 min

By making thin cuts you increase the surface area for maximum crispy-edge-to-fluff ratio for this classic side.

- **4 large Maris Piper or Désirée potatoes**
- **75g unsalted butter, melted with 2 tbsp olive oil**
- **3 garlic cloves, crushed**
- **Few thyme sprigs, leaves picked**

1. Make thin vertical cuts a few millimetres apart to three quarters the depth of the potatoes. Brush generously with half the oil and butter mixture and season with salt. Bake at 180C fan/gas 6 for 30 min.
2. Remove from the oven and gently fan open the slices. Push the garlic and thyme into the slits and brush with the remaining butter and oil. Bake for another 25-30 min until the edges are golden and crisp.



5. CHILLED SOUP

6. RÖSTI

5. CHILLED LEEK AND POTATO SOUP

Serves: 4. Total time: 45 min, plus chilling

Its blandness is almost the point of a classic, comforting vichyssoise. If you want a lighter soup, use single instead of double cream. It will improve after 24 hours in the fridge, so this is a good one to make well in advance.

- **30g unsalted butter**
- **3 large leeks, white and light green parts only, washed and sliced**
- **500g Maris Piper or King Edward potatoes, peeled and cubed**
- **1 litre vegetable or chicken stock**
- **60ml double or single cream**
- **Fresh chives, snipped, to garnish**

1. Melt the butter in a heavy saucepan over a medium heat. Add the leeks and cook gently for 8-10 min until soft without browning.
2. Add the cubed potatoes and stock. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 20 min until the potatoes are very tender.
3. Puree with a stick blender until smooth. Stir in the cream, season well with salt and white pepper and leave to cool before transferring to the fridge for at least 4 hours. Top with fresh chives and serve.

6. RÖSTI

Serves: 2-4. Total time: 50 min

Crisp and golden brown on the outside and fluffy within, these are the acceptable face of hash browns for breakfast, served with bacon and fried eggs.

- **800g all-purpose potatoes, eg Désirée or Maris Piper**
- **75g butter, melted with 2 tbsp olive oil**

1. Parboil the potatoes whole for 10 min. Drain and let them cool completely before peeling and coarsely grating.
2. Add a splash of the butter and oil to a large nonstick frying pan. Add half the shredded potatoes, season and press gently into a flat cake. Cook over a medium heat for 10-12 min until a crisp, deep golden crust forms underneath.
3. Flip the cake, add another splash of butter and oil and cook for another 10-12 min before serving. Repeat with the remaining shredded potatoes. Serve each rösti topped with a fried egg. ■

Win a dream holiday with us

Tell us about your holiday heroes, from airlines and cruises to tours and hotels, and you could win one of five fantastic prizes to Europe, Greenland, Jamaica and more.

Vote now at **thetimes.com/travelawards**

Proudly sponsored by:

DESTINATIONS
THE HOLIDAY & TRAVEL SHOW

UK residents 18+ only. Ends 23.59 BST October 18, 2026. See thetimes.com/traveltermsandconditions for full prize descriptions, privacy policy & T&Cs. Promoter: Times Media Ltd.

We promise to never put down a healthy dog.

Please promise to leave a gift in your Will to give dogs a lifetime of love and care.

A gift in your Will to Dogs Trust can help take care of around 14,000 dogs in one of our 22 rehoming centres, located all across the UK. We need the help of kind people like you to give abandoned dogs the happy and healthy life they deserve.

To get your free guide about gifts in Wills
E: infopack@dogstrust.org.uk or T: 020 7837 0006

Please quote **"1058889"**, or complete the coupon below.

☐ **Please send me a free guide about gifts in Wills**
(Please fill out in block capitals)

Title **First Name**

Surname

Address

Postcode **1058889**

From time to time we would like to send you exciting updates about our work, products, services and how you can support us, including fundraising activities and research by post. If you'd rather not receive these mailings, please tick here ☐

We treat your personal information with care and respect your privacy. We do share your information with Dogs Trust and its subsidiaries. Your personal information is never shared with third parties for their own marketing purposes. It may be processed on our behalf by carefully selected partners. For more information about how we look after and analyse your data, please visit our privacy policy: **dogstrust.org.uk/privacy**.

Please send this coupon to: **FREEPOST DOGSTRUSTL** (No stamp required.)

REMEMBER A CHARITY IN YOUR WILL
Help the work live on...

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

A dog is for life®
dogstrust.org.uk

Registered Charity Numbers 1167663 & SC053144
Co. Ltd 09365971

© Dogs Trust 2026

The twins aged seven in 1985

Van Tulleken with his son Rex

His twin was furious about his obesity. 'Now he says, it's not you; it's the food environment'

"I was spread thin and it's good to be busy," he recalls. But as a parent he felt "a bit redundant", since Julian's mother and her new partner were his son's main carers. Isolated, lonely, travelling too much to form relationships, Van Tulleken dealt with stress by overeating. His weakness was Chinese food and within a year he'd gained 4st.

Chris was furious, frustrated and unkind about his twin's obesity: "Anyone with a family member who's doing something a bit self-destructive will go, 'Why can't you stop?'" Xand says. Only when researching *Ultra-Processed People* did Chris "come out the other end and say, 'Oh, it's not you; it was the food environment you were in.' And if you'd put him in those circumstances in that place, probably the same thing would have happened."

It was returning to England and falling in love with Dolly, a doctor, academic and food policy expert, which led him to lose weight. "I remember the first time I went for a run with Dolly. I came back, burst into tears and just thought, 'I've completely neglected my body.'" He complains he still gains weight around his middle. I ask if he'd take GLP-1 drugs and he says maybe: "They mean I can face the future knowing it's not as nightmarishly difficult to lose weight as it might be."

He believes GLP-1s are more effective and better value than personal nutrition plans offered by companies like Zoe — whose creator, Tim Spector, once called the overweight Van Tulleken "a disgrace to his genes" — which he criticises in his book. Van Tulleken signed up for Zoe with multiple accounts pretending to be men or women of various ages. Although the health data was all his, Zoe gave a variety of readings, diagnoses and diet programmes. How will the Zoe people react? "I don't know. But I would be very embarrassed if I were them." A Zoe spokesperson says, "It is a personalised programme, so different profiles produce different outputs. That isn't a glitch."

Make Me Well is scathing about such wellness fads, including wearable technology that claims to diagnose heart defects, and private blood tests that, although largely worthless, can create a cascade of unnecessary medical investigations. Van Tulleken admits that 15 years ago he accepted a six-figure sum for one day's work advertising such tests for a Swedish company. "I wasn't being cynical," he says. "I genuinely thought they were democratising healthcare." There are phenomenal rewards, he says, for a well-known doctor prepared to turn influencer.

He doesn't object to Gwyneth Paltrow flogging jade eggs as an ancient remedy, just that she "used medical papers and medical language and medical evidence to sell those things". (In 2018, Paltrow's company, Goop, was fined £112,000 by California's consumer protection office for making unscientific claims about vaginal eggs.) Wellness products, Van Tulleken finds, cherry-pick data to present themselves as "sciencey" without requiring any proof they work.

The book's most eye-opening chapter involves Van Tulleken visiting a Chinese supplements factory, which happily offers to create a product making any claims he fancies. He is shown a pill bottle bearing the words "Made in USA" and told, "You see, we can put anything on the label and anything in the tablets."

Food supplements, he says, are "petrol-station flowers" for your body: last-minute, desperate substitutes for properly managing your health. He is outraged that wellness companies market expensive pills at people who can barely afford decent food.

So what of my cod liver oil? "A miracle cure if you lived in Victorian England," Van Tulleken says, but pointless now. Creatine, that fashionable magic dust? Also pointless, unless you do explosive sports like weightlifting or sprinting. Ferrous oxide? This he'll allow, since my low iron diagnosis is medical. My husband's fizzy vitamin C? "If he likes it, that's fine. Although the most it will do is reduce the duration of a cold by six hours."

Does he take supplements himself? No, he says, but his children, Daphne, nine months, and Rex, two, have vitamin D drops and a multivitamin, "although I feel these are a bit redundant, as we feed them a good diet". His wife's pregnancies were particularly instructive in how wellness companies rapaciously target women. "We looked at 'pregnacare' products, and there was the normal version, the pro version, the max version and the ultra version. And that was when we went, 'Well, what kind of baby do we want? An ultra baby? A pro baby?' And this one's triple the price. In the end, Dolly just took folic acid, which the NHS advises."

He does wear a heart monitor when he exercises, not just because he had heart surgery following a grave dose of Covid, "but because I like to see the numbers on the screen. I'm not subscribed to any apps. But I do like my Peloton exercise bike."

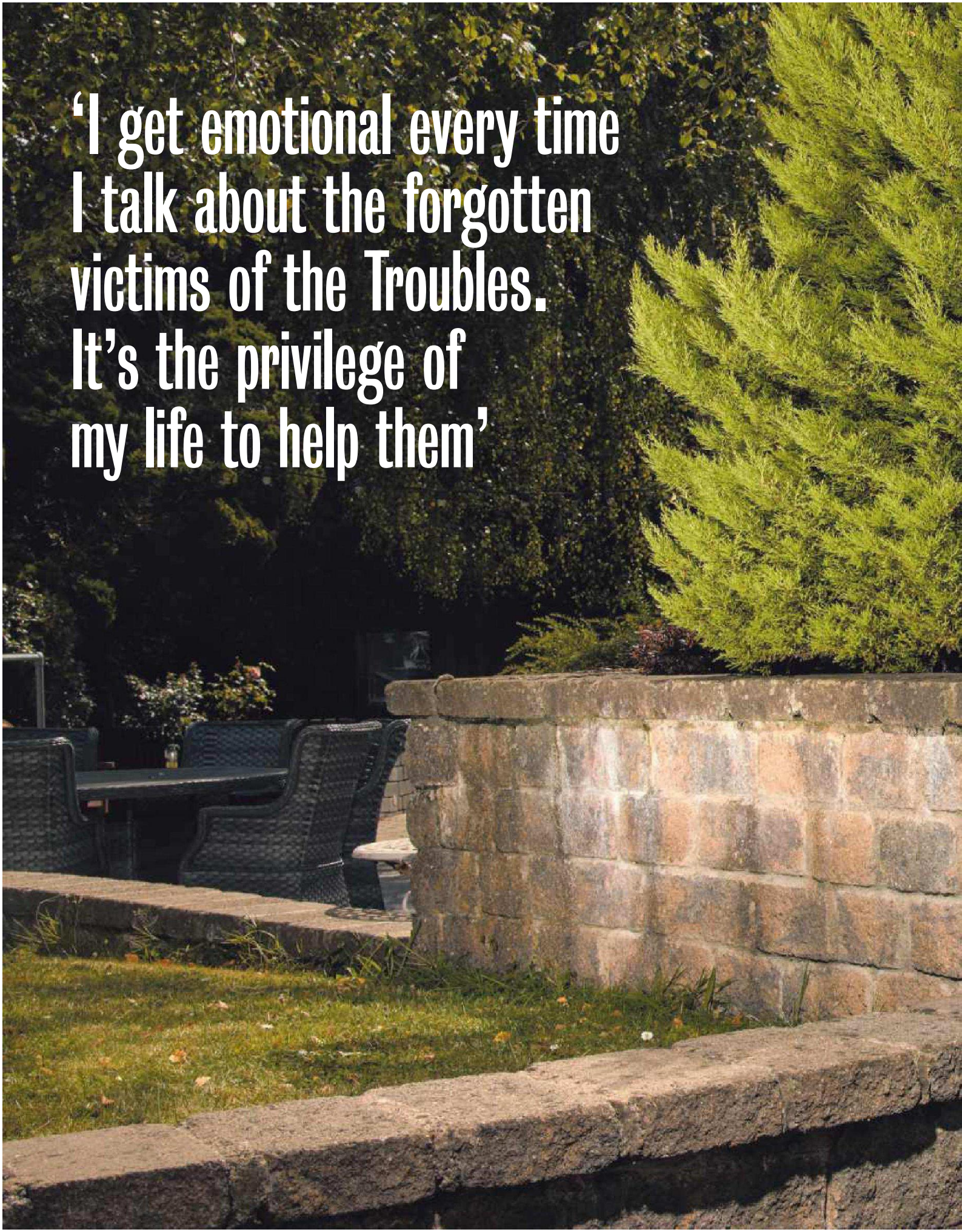
Given humans are more affluent and long-lived than at any time in history, why are we so obsessed with wellness? Van Tulleken believes it is driven by a world that "demands optimisation and performance. For the same reason young people don't drink very much, you're expected to have a portfolio career and always be 'on'."

Yet he puts his own wellbeing down to his young children, his marriage — he sweetly texts me later to clarify he is "still in love" with Dolly — and his bond with the now 17-year-old Julian, despite the obstacles and distance. "I get emotional talking about him," he says, his eyes welling, "because I just think of all the ways that could have worked out. And he's so far away, and he could be so resentful or irritated. But this summer he came on holiday with my children and Dolly and I thought, gosh, it's so extraordinary."

I say his conclusions are reassuringly eternal. The keys to wellness are a good diet, sleep, exercise, good relationships, feeling connected to others and mastering a skill. (During Covid he became an adept potter, and owns his own kiln.) He laughs and says, "No, Janice, they're not. No one's ever heard these things before. You have to buy this book!" But, I say, pointing to my pill collection, it's a great relief I can throw all this stuff away. And, apart from the iron tablets, that is exactly what I do. ■

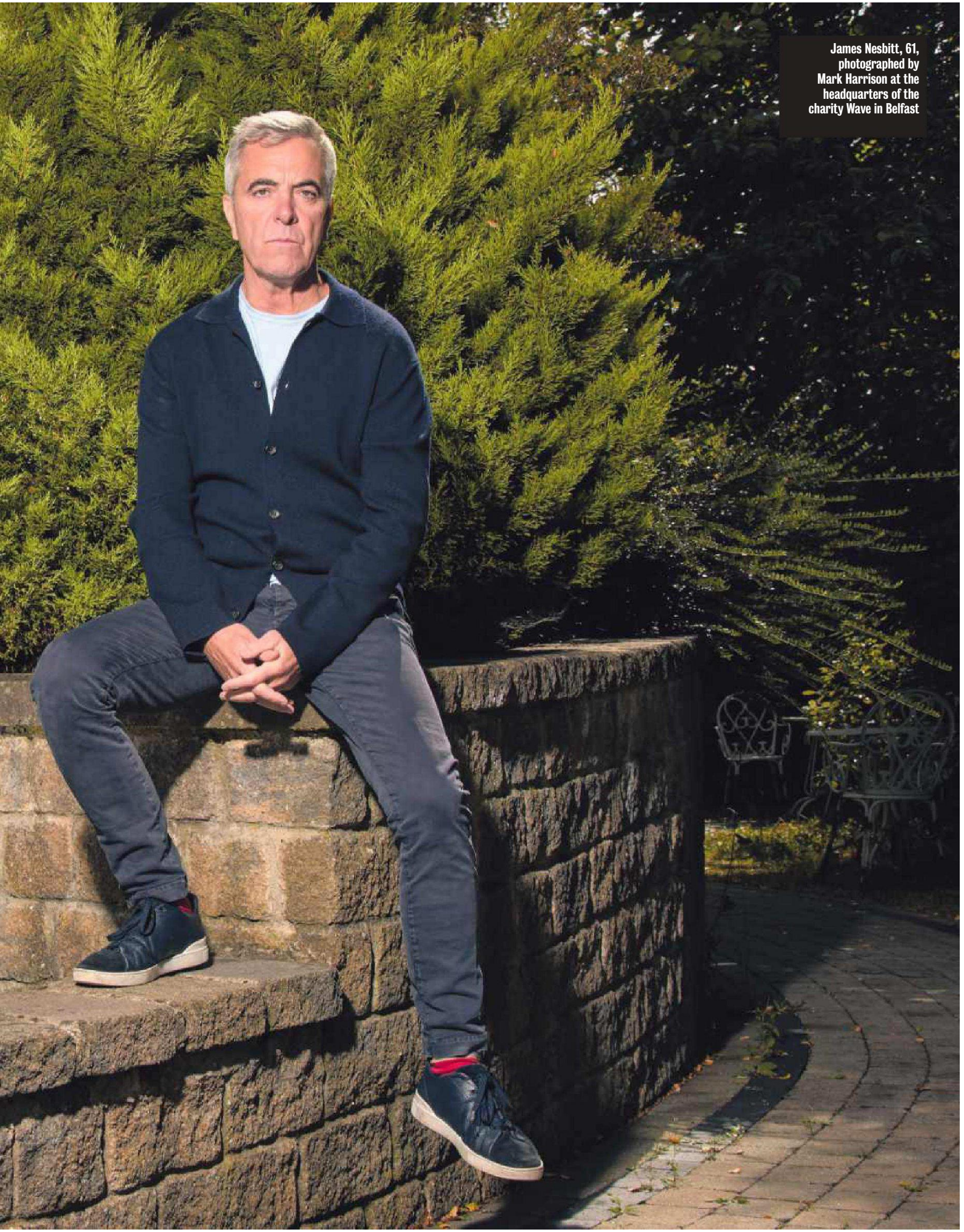
Make Me Well *by Xand van Tulleken (Cornerstone Press, £22). To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935. Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for Times+ members*

COURTESY OF XAND VAN TULLEKEN, BBC



‘I get emotional every time I talk about the forgotten victims of the Troubles. It’s the privilege of my life to help them’

The Northern Irish actor James Nesbitt has been a TV star for decades — but now it’s his work



James Nesbitt, 61, photographed by Mark Harrison at the headquarters of the charity Wave in Belfast

with the families bereaved by the Troubles that really drives him. Interview by Sean O'Neill

James Nesbitt and I are facing each other in matching, straight-backed armchairs. He swings his legs this way, then the other, crosses them, then uncrosses them. He leans forward to make a point, then sits back reflecting on a question. Every so often he fixes me with that intense, unwavering stare — you know, the unnerving one you've seen on the telly.

I'm not sure if he is uncomfortable — the chair, maybe — or animated. I settle for animated because it quickly becomes apparent Nesbitt is very comfortable in this grand, rambling, slightly shabby old house in north Belfast. He's been coming here for more than 20 years. No one bats an eyelid at the sight of his famous face — the star of *Cold Feet*, *Bloodlands*, *Murphy's Law*, *The Missing* and three recent Harlan Coben Netflix mini-series. Everyone calls him Jimmy. This is like a second home.

The big house was designed by a Victorian architect as a family home but is now the head office of Wave, a charity of which Nesbitt, 61, is patron. He's animated because our conversation concerns something Nesbitt is passionate about: Wave's work in advocating for the bereaved families and injured survivors of the civil conflict — known as the Troubles — that tore Northern Ireland apart for 30 years. Has history ever come up with a more understated label for a horrific orgy of violence, intimidation, fear and hatred?

Nesbitt first came here for a charity auction: "We did well that evening, raised money in the auction — but it didn't leave me. You go to a lot of things, you do it and away you go. But this — this ignited me."

He stops for a moment, voice catching: "I'm hopeless, every time I talk about it I get emotional. But there was a kind of an innocence and a purity to the people I met.

"This organisation was dealing with people who had been forgotten. You could sense these people were relieved to have been thrown together, that for the first time they had a voice and they seemed to have something in common. What they had in common, I began to realise, was trauma."

There were more than 3,200 homicides and tens of thousands of people were injured in Northern Ireland between the outbreak of violence in 1969 until the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. That peace deal made arrangements for paramilitary disarmament, release of prisoners and new political structures, but there was no provision for questions of legacy — the wellbeing of victims or who'd investigate more than 1,000 unsolved murders.

"The legacy of Northern Ireland's violent past has to be addressed because if these issues aren't resolved, the trauma passes from one generation to another," says Nesbitt. "Transgenerational trauma is a huge issue, which I don't think people are fully aware of. I see it here in the new referrals here every year – not just children but grandchildren, because their parents, their grandparents, were unable to get answers about what happened. So many crimes were never solved.

"In Britain the debate about this legacy has focused on one issue, which is the [military] veterans. And, of course, the veterans are important, but so are these people. They're not living in the past — they're living with the past and it's vital that they cannot be forgotten."

In the 2002 film Bloody Sunday

MARK HARRISON, ALAMY

Nesbitt was born in 1965 in rural Co Antrim and went to a tiny primary school in the hamlet of Lisnamurrican where his father was the headteacher. The locality was rarely touched by the violence. He is from the Protestant side of Northern Ireland's sectarian divide and played with his father in the local Ballymena Young Conquerors flute band. But, he says, his father was also "a torchbearer for integration" and sent Nesbitt and his three older sisters to a Catholic convent school for piano lessons.

"I was aware of 'the other side' and I was aware the Troubles were going on, but it was a backdrop. I felt distanced from it even though it was just up the road."

Nesbitt left Northern Ireland in 1985 for drama school in London, threw himself into an acting career and landed his big break as Adam, the cheeky charmer in the ITV hit *Cold Feet,* which began in 1997 and ran for five series until 2003.

Around 2000, he was approached by the director Paul Greengrass with a proposal to play the lead in his film *Bloody Sunday* about the events in Derry in 1972 when soldiers of the Parachute Regiment shot dead 14 unarmed civil rights marchers.

'It was only when I did Bloody Sunday I thought, "Oh, acting's got value"'

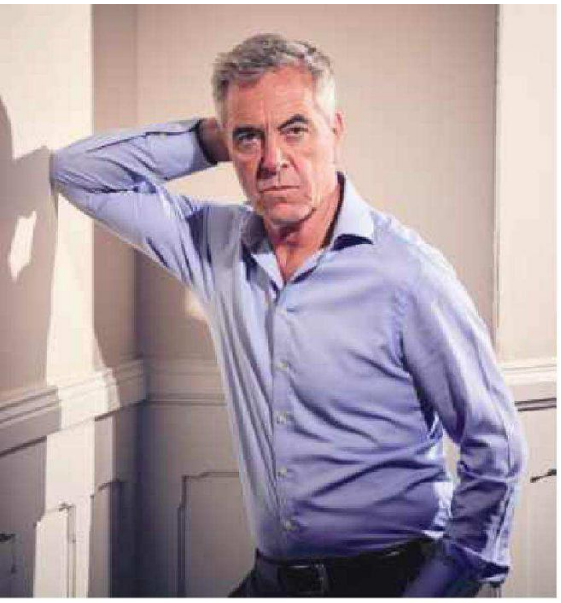
"I used to play football with Paul and he asked to visit me in Manchester. He told me that he always felt actors from the north of Ireland, at some point, had to take on the Troubles. It was a responsibility, like taking on *Lear* or something like that.

"That film made me examine where I came from, what my relationship with it was, but also it made me understand why I loved where I came from and understand why I loved acting. I worked from the moment I left drama school but I didn't really take it seriously. It was only when I did *Bloody Sunday* that I thought, 'Oh God, it's kind of got worth and value.'"

The film, in which Nesbitt played the march organiser Ivan Cooper — a Protestant politician who represented a Catholic constituency — earned him a Bafta nomination and a best actor award at the British Independent Film Awards in 2002. On the back of that, Nesbitt was invited to the Wave auction by the charity's chief executive, Sandra Peake. Not long after that, he visited the centre and, in the same room where we are speaking, met Mags McKinney and Michael McConville, relatives of two of the Disappeared — the 17 people murdered and secretly buried by the IRA.

Mags's son Brian, a 22-year-old with learning difficulties, was abducted by the IRA in May 1978 and accused of stealing one of its guns. He and his friend John McClory, 18, were murdered and buried in bogland; IRA men told the families the youths had been ordered to leave Northern Ireland. Their bodies were found buried together in 1999.

Michael is one of the ten children of widow Jean McConville, 38, who was abducted, murdered and secretly buried by the IRA in 1972 after being accused of being an informant for the security forces.



He stood in the rain with the family while forensic teams searched for remains

The children were separated and some placed in abusive care homes. Their mother's body was found after a storm washed away part of a beach embankment in Co Louth in August 2003.

The stories had "an extraordinary impact" on Nesbitt. "Michael is a quiet man but there is anger there. He was 11 years old when his mother was abducted and murdered. Six of the nine brothers and sisters he had have since died, five of them before they were 60. It was tragedy heaped upon tragedy.

"Mags told her story with such compassion, such grace, such honesty, and a kind of forgiveness. She spent years and years waiting every night for Brian to come back. Spent years then thinking about him crying out for his mummy before the bullet went in. But her resilience, her perseverance, her unending energy to get his remains returned. Going to Washington to meet Bill Clinton and driving him to tears. She became a fundamental part in the change — it took an old woman like Mags to persuade the perpetrators to give up vital information."

The bodies of four of the Disappeared have still not been found and their recovery is a cause to which Nesbitt is particularly attached. Searches continue for the remains of Joe Lynskey, Columba McVeigh, Seamus Maguire and British Army officer Captain Robert Nairac.

Nesbitt finds it galling when it is said of victims of the Troubles that they need to "move on" or that they "were in the wrong place at the wrong time".

He shakes his head. "No one has moved on more than those who lost their legs in a bomb in their twenties, who were blinded in an instant, who were shot and paralysed and in a wheelchair for the rest of their lives. They have moved on — they shouldn't be asked to move away.

"And they weren't in the wrong place at the wrong time. They were where they were supposed to be: at work or out on a date, in a pub, at a cinema. They were just taking a walk home."

Wave staff tell of the quiet, unseen work Nesbitt does telephoning families on the anniversaries of deaths and disappearances. He has stood in pelting rain with the brother and sister of Columba McVeigh at Bragan Bog on the Irish border as forensic teams — with diggers and ground penetrating radar — searched (unsuccessfully) for his remains.

Next year will be the 50th anniversary of the murder of Nairac, who was abducted from a pub on the border while operating undercover. Nesbitt insists, "If the conflict is truly over, there is no reason why a British soldier's remains should be lying on the island of Ireland. It's that simple."

The actor pauses when I ask why his involvement with these families has become so important to him. "With the fortuitous success that I have had and the fame that comes with it, as much as you think you're in control of things, it's hard not to be a bit corrupted. You lose a wee bit of yourself, you know, sort of step away from your own reality. If you've got a public profile, there's great things that come with it, but at some point, if you're given the opportunity for that public profile to highlight important issues about others, it becomes part of a healing process.

"These families are my friends now and it's an enormous privilege, the privilege of my life to be part of this. It's given me something to be proud of, something my parents would have been proud of. I'm not a religious man, but my mother used to love the widow's mite story — about a woman who gives away her last coin. She said, 'That's the main thing, James, carry the widow's mite story in your life, you'll be all right.'"

A few days after we talked, Nesbitt and Peake met the new Northern Ireland Secretary, Chris Bryant, to press him on victims' issues. Wave has previously been instrumental in securing a pension payout for people injured in the conflict.

Nesbitt, who is divorced and has two adult daughters, spends more and more time back in Northern Ireland. He has a home on the spectacular north coast and regularly plays golf at the famous Royal Portrush club. He's buzzing after a weekend at the Fleadh — an Irish music celebration that drew a million and a half visitors to Belfast. There's a cultural renewal afoot in the north of Ireland and Nesbitt is one of many embracing it and re-evaluating the question of identity in a corner of the world where identity politics has long been a curse.

"I hold a British and an Irish passport. But I very much consider myself an Irish Protestant from the north of Ireland, who in no way denies anyone else the titles that they give themselves. I think you can call yourself Irish, you can call yourself Northern Irish, you can call yourself from the north, you can do whatever you want."

At his first audition for *Cold Feet*, all those years ago, Nesbitt argued for his character having a Northern Irish accent. "There was sweat on my palms because I wasn't really known, and it was only a pilot but everyone went up for it. I knew it was going to be good and a chance it was going to be massive. I walked in and said, 'I'm the only person that can play this and it has to be done in a Northern Irish accent.' And I said to the director, 'You will be able to take credit for having a Northern Irish voice in a drama where it's nothing to do with the Troubles for the first time.'"

He's worked in major roles ever since, perhaps in part because he's the man who broke the taboo about male hair transplants. Nesbitt sports a very convincing head of silver grey. "They're good, aren't they? Having it done gave me confidence and confidence probably has helped in my longevity."

The bigger factor in his longevity though has been a strong work ethic. "I think people have a perception of me that, 'Oh, he just sort of turns up and does it.' But it's hard work and I like being competitive. I like the responsibility of being a leading man. I love walking on set. I love carrying projects."

He's currently filming *Hercule* (based on the Poirot mysteries) for the BBC/BritBox North America, while the success of the Harlan Coben dramas — *Stay Close*, *Missing You* and *Run Away* has given him a new burst of global fame.

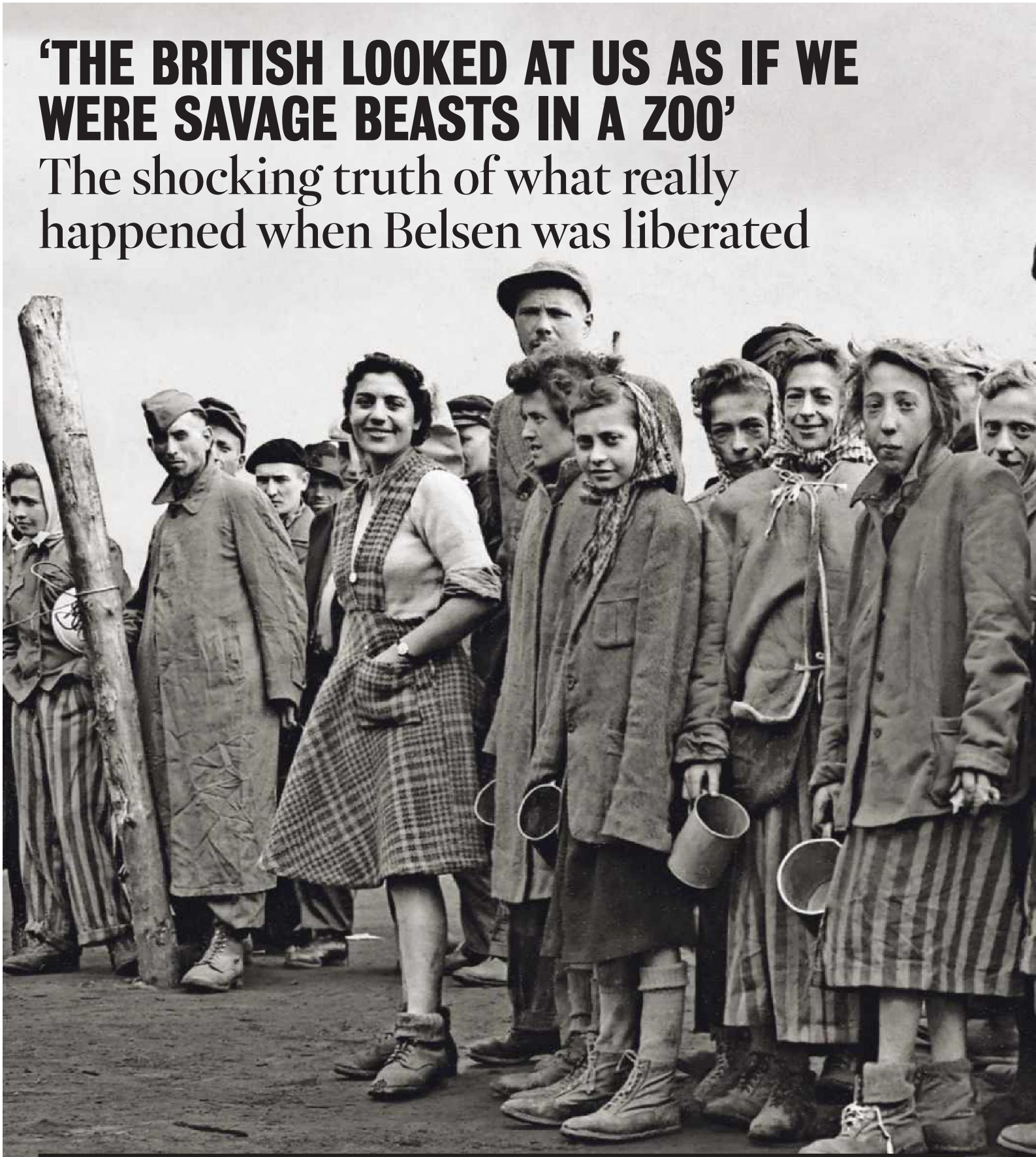
"They're bonkers, but he's great, and I love it," says Nesbitt. "The Netflix thing has been quite a shift for me because I've been well known here in the UK and a bit in Europe, but I've never really had a global platform. Anywhere I go now, since I did my first Harlan one, it's extraordinary. You're known everywhere.

"I absolutely fight to do the Northern Irish voice now because I want that sound to travel the world. I love the idea of those countries where they dub the actors trying to translate 'a bucket of shite' into Chinese." ■

Anyone with information on any of the four outstanding Disappeared cases should contact the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains by telephone (+353 1 602 8655), post (ICLVR, PO Box 10827) or email (secretary@iclvr.ie). All information treated in the strictest confidence

‘THE BRITISH LOOKED AT US AS IF WE WERE SAVAGE BEASTS IN A ZOO’

The shocking truth of what really happened when Belsen was liberated



When British troops discovered the Nazi-operated Bergen-Belsen camp in April 1945, the suffering was far from over. Another 13,000 inmates would perish, the army was hopelessly overwhelmed and the BBC would sanitise the legendary broadcaster Richard Dimbleby’s report for fear of causing offence at home. In his new book, the historian Max Hastings explores the horrific aftermath

Internees wait for soup at Belsen camp after it was taken over by the British Second Army

At midday on April 12, 1945, a Mercedes staff car flying a white flag arrived at a British Army headquarters in Germany. Its passengers were two Wehrmacht colonels, who claimed to bear important information. In the path of the allied advance, they said, was an "internment camp" called Bergen-Belsen. The enemy officers had come to propose a local truce, to prevent the spread of the typhus with which many inmates were infected.

Divisional commander General "Pip" Roberts wrote later, "The name meant absolutely nothing to me, nor to any of us." British medical staff likewise knew nothing of Belsen, but were fearful of the terrible disease. The German deputation proposed that their troops would hold the camp perimeter until 10am the next day, when they would retire, leaving 50 SS personnel to guard the compounds. The British accepted this proposal.

For the next two days, British troops found themselves plunged into urgent war operations elsewhere. There was no sense of any priority to be accorded to Belsen, no consciousness that tens of thousands of lives were imperilled by every hour of delay, because nobody knew what was happening there.

It seems significant that in the British and American pocketbooks about Germany, issued to every allied soldier, concentration camps were unmentioned. The historian Ben Shephard has written, "The military ... saw 'DPs' ['displaced persons', including concentration camp inmates] primarily as obstacles, refugees who might get in their way."

In early 1945 about 2.7 million Russians, 1.6 million Poles, half a million Yugoslavs and like numbers of Italian, Dutch and Belgian workers, together with 1.3 million French people, were labouring in Germany, almost all under compulsion. Jews, even those in death camps, were still classified by the allies as DPs.

Most of Eisenhower's soldiers were oblivious of the enormity of what these people had suffered at Nazi hands. George Taylor, a bluff, brave, dim British infantry colonel, found himself confronted by a slave labourer who complained that his master, a nearby farmer, had misused him and other prisoners. Taylor responded like a public school prefect: "We arrested the farmer and I ordered the worker to give him six of the best. The [slave labourer] wanted to continue the punishment, but I resisted the temptation and stopped him."

Uncertainty persists about who were the first British soldiers to reach Belsen on April 15 — probably two SAS soldiers on a reconnaissance. The task of taking over the camp was allocated to an anti-tank unit, which had nothing more important to do. Its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Taylor, was made temporary commandant. His orders were "to prevent the spread of disease and prevent criminals from breaking out". A medical team was also sent, which would prove tragically inadequate to the scale of a vast challenge. Captain Derrick Sington, the final addition to the party, was a 37-year-old former journalist turned psychological warfare officer who spoke German, and himself half-Jewish.

The British column arrived at the gates at 3pm on the 15th to be met by the SS headed by Belsen's commandant. Josef Kramer told British officers that the compounds were occupied by "homosexuals and criminals". The SS betrayed no embarrassment or guilt.

Taylor's vehicles drove forward until they reached a high wooden gate which reminded Sington of the entrance to a zoo, not least because of the "smell of the monkey house". Then, in his words, "a strange simian throng... clowns in their terrible motley", rushed forward. He and his fellow clean, well-fed and pitifully ignorant British soldiers entered hell.

Bergen-Belsen had been created in 1942 as a "transit camp". It was not a designated killing facility like Auschwitz, merely a place where tens of thousands died. Detainees were herded there from Hungary, France, Greece, Poland, Holland. The inmate Hanna Levy-Hass wrote in September 1944, "Our hut is like a madhouse. It is exactly what the Nazis intended — to humiliate us and reduce us to animals, to extinguish even the faintest memory we might have that we were once human beings."

The camp's population grew from 15,257 at Christmas 1944 to 44,000 by the end of March, despite 18,000 deaths in that month alone. A fellow prisoner asked a teenager, the great Dutch diarist Anne Frank, why she was wrapped in a blanket. The girl responded that her clothes were so riddled with fleas that she had thrown them away. She and her sister, Margot, died of typhus in February or March.

A farmer's wife from Poland named Luba Tryszynska had seen her child dragged from her at Auschwitz but was herself spared because of her beauty. At Belsen she became a legendarily heroic nurse, working with doctors Hadassah Bimko and a Slovakian called Hermina Kranz, battling dysentery. One inmate said, "We were virtually drowning in our own faeces and urine."

The collision between the British and Belsen traumatised both the would-be deliverers and the victims of this crime against humanity. Soldiers threw up at the stench. The sight of people "who had once been Polish officers, Budapest doctors, land workers in Ukraine, students in France" obliged Sington to fight back tears.

Two young women who survived over a year at Belsen

The British Second Army's chief doctor burst into tears at his first inspection

The camp's commandant, Josef Kramer, left

He sought to address the prisoners surging around his vehicle. Unmanned by his own sense of inadequacy in the face of the unspeakable, he chose grotesquely banal words: "Ihr seid frei!" — "You are free!" The women burst into hysterical cries. An SS guard fired in the air to drive back the throng. Sington drew a revolver and made the German drop his rifle. Again and again the officer repeated his clumsy, well-meaning message: "You are free. We are the English Army. Be calm. Food and medical help are on the way." This assurance was a travesty, given the scale of need in the camp.

Taylor reported "a great number of [the prisoners] were little more than living skeletons ... Most of the men wore a striped pyjama type of clothing — others wore rags while the women wore striped flannel gowns ... There were men and women lying in heaps on either side of the

PREVIOUS SPREAD: CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES. THIS SPREAD: AP, GETTY IMAGES, GALERIE BILDERWELT/GETTY IMAGES

An SS guard taking dead bodies to a mass grave. Left: a British soldier reads a sign at the camp entrance

track. Others were walking slowly and aimlessly about, a vacant expression on their starved faces." Then the liberators found corpses, stacked in hundreds. It is important to remember that Taylor and his men were not doctors or psychiatrists but soldiers, suddenly called upon to accept a role outside their competence or, indeed, imagination.

They realised that the first priorities were to bring in trained helpers, food, water, medical supplies. At Camp II, a satellite established in a Panzer training barracks, there was serious violence against the Kapos — "trusties" appointed by the Germans to enforce discipline. Anything up to 150 were killed, most by being thrown from upstairs windows.

Sington appealed for order. He identified three main categories of prisoner. Jews, especially women, made up more than half the total. There were also "politicals" — French and Belgian people who had aided the Resistance. In the men's section were 15,287 mostly Russians and Poles.

On the afternoon of the 15th, Brigadier Glyn Hughes, chief doctor of the Second Army, arrived. Hughes was a 52-year-old former rugby player and doctor who, back in rural Devon, liked to saddle a horse to visit his patients. At Belsen, he burst into tears during his first inspection.

Hughes was accompanied by a war correspondent, Richard Dimbleby, who had made an impulsive decision to view this unknown camp for lack of anything more battle-related to broadcast about. In Britain, Dimbleby was already famous. He had joined the BBC in 1936 and reported on the African campaigns. He returned home to accompany several of the RAF's supremely hazardous bomber operations against Germany, flying on one raid with Wing-Commander Guy Gibson, VC.

The reporter's warmth won him a huge audience. This represented a triumph over the BBC hierarchy, resentful both of his expenses claims and his celebrity. Grey men in Broadcasting House attempted to dispense with Dimbleby, who now became the first western correspondent to behold Belsen. He began his subsequent report:

I passed through the barrier and found myself in the world of a nightmare. Dead bodies, some of them in decay, lay strewn about the road and along the rutted track. On each side of the road were brown wooden huts. There were faces at the windows, the bony emaciated faces of starving women too weak to come outside, propping themselves against the glass to see the light before they died. And they were dying, every hour, every minute. I saw a man, wandering dazedly along the road, stagger and fall. Someone else looked down at him, took him by the heels and dragged him to the side of the road to join the other bodies lying unburied there. No one else took the slightest notice — they didn't even trouble to turn their heads. I have seen many terrible sights in the last five years, but nothing, nothing approaching the dreadful interior of this hut at Belsen.

Dimbleby's colleague Wynford Vaughan-Thomas met him on his return to the army press centre and was shocked by his appearance: "He was a changed man ... I had never seen Richard so moved." The correspondent broke down into tears as he began to record his dispatch. He told Vaughan-Thomas, "I must tell the exact truth, every detail of it, even if people don't believe me, even if they feel these things should not be told."

When his recording arrived in London, BBC executives recoiled in disgust from what they perceived as their man's sensationalism. They declined to broadcast it until it was confirmed by others.

There remains a widespread belief that when Belsen was "liberated", the sufferings of its inmates were soon ended. It was not quite like that. A combination of inadequate resources, insufficient command attention and battlefield imperatives caused the British response to the camp's horrors to be tragically slow and pitifully inadequate.

Only at 4pm on April 16 did the first convoy of water tankers and food trucks arrive. Thereafter the first mistake was that inmates' representatives were entrusted with distribution. In consequence, the stronger prisoners secured food and the weak got nothing.

Moreover, the supplies initially dispatched — American stew and British rations — were ideal for fit soldiers, but catastrophic for starving people, who wolfed everything. Many immediately vomited, which at least saved their lives. Others collapsed with diarrhoea.

A girl who importuned a British soldier to give her corned beef and sugar promptly expired. Many inmates' hearts had shrunk to 40 per cent of their natural weights. Their large bowels were so thin and distended as to be transparent.

Prisoners continued to die faster than they could be buried by squads of SS under British guard. On April 19, 825 perished, two days later 400, then on April 22 more than 1,000. Sington said, "One felt desperately powerless." There were still far too few medical personnel, and an estimated 17,000 inmates needed immediate hospital treatment.

On April 17, Lieutenant Colonel Mervin Gonin, a former GP from Ipswich, took over medical command. He estimated that 10,000 of the camp inmates were certain to die, whether taken to hospital or not. On the 21st, the British started evacuating the worst of the sick from the women's compounds to the Panzer training barracks, where conditions were better.

It was found that if decisions about who moved were left to inmates, they ruthlessly favoured their own national group. British doctors intervened, to nominate instead those with a chance of life. One said, "It was a heart-rending ➨

NSPCC

“I’ve looked after my loved ones in my Will. Now I want to protect other children too.”

Join Jo and help protect children for generations to come.

Leaving a gift in your Will to the NSPCC is the most powerful way to protect children long into the future. Like Jo, you can help shape happier childhoods.

Gifts in Wills change children’s lives

Around a quarter of the NSPCC’s donations come from gifts in Wills. They help give children someone to talk to when they feel scared. And give adults worried about a child clear guidance on how to help.

Find out more with our FREE guide

It’s easier than you think to leave a life-changing gift in your Will. The NSPCC’s free Gifts in Wills guide explains the simple steps. There’s no obligation, just a helpful place to start.

Request your FREE Gifts in Wills guide today.

Scan the QR code, visit **nspcc.org.uk/freeguide** or call **020 7825 2505**

©NSPCC 2026. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Registered charity England and Wales 216401, Scotland SC037717 and Jersey 384.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

job and amounted to telling hundreds of poor wretches that they were left to die." Desperate voices cried out: "I'm next! I'm next!" "Take me! Take me!" At a "laundry" outside the compound, each evacuee was washed and deloused, their lice-riddled hair cut off, a process women found intolerably distressing. The selection — a dreadful word for those who had experienced such a process under Nazi auspices — was highly successful: of 14,000 inmates who passed through it, only two subsequently died.

Eleven days after the liberators first heard of Belsen, 7,000 inmates had died there since relief operations began. A French nightclub singer named Mona Georges, seized by the Gestapo because of her Resistance work, told Derrick Sington, "M'sieur, if we stay in this place we shall all have died of the pestilence." When a soldier, supposing the Polish housewife Bertha Ferderber dead, grabbed her leg and summoned a companion to carry her away, she said sardonically in English, "Have patience. Not yet."

Inmates proved recalcitrant about following diets which were now carefully prescribed. Confronted by the almost taste-free fare that was all doctors advised, one inmate asked in disgust, "Do you call this food?" The craving for more, always more to eat, obsessed them. Stretcher bearer Manny Fisher recorded one day, "After my lunch, I came back to find my only efficient nurse weeping. She couldn't carry on, she said. The men had rioted during my absence — they had run about naked, searching for food. They had entered the doctor's room and stolen some biscuits I had given him. The whole place was in an uproar. 'Food, food, food' was all I heard. Some of the men were quite out of their minds."

Fisher was 25, the son of a Russian-born cabinetmaker in the East End of London. His narrative continued: "One Jewish woman, aged about 45 as far as I could guess, said as soon as she was put in bed, 'Please, I want to go to America... They shot my husband and two sons in front of me.'" Another of the women appealed to Fisher, "Must I die? I am only 17."

Some first-time visitors to the camp recoiled from the spectacle of off-duty doctors drinking themselves insensible on gin, brandy, champagne. A rabbi who remonstrated received the response, "If we were not to drink, we should go stark staring mad. We are supposed to heal, but this task is hopeless. They die on us as soon as we touch them."

On April 24, the burgomasters of local towns were brought to view the burial pits. The British commandant addressed them: "You who represent the fathers and brothers of German youth see before your eyes a few of the sons and daughters [SS staff] who bear a small part of direct

'Some women sought love to feel human again, some sold their bodies for cigarettes'

responsibility for this crime ... But who bears the final responsibility? You, who have allowed your Führer to carry out his terrible whims."

Thousands of British troops saw Belsen, as did the war correspondent Alan Moorehead. He reflected afterwards, "The most terrible thing on earth is not positive destruction nor the perverse desire to hurt and destroy. The worst thing that can happen to you is for the master to say, 'I do not care about you any more. I am indifferent.' Whether you washed or ate or laughed or died — none of this was of any consequence, because you as a person had no value. You were a slug on the ground, to be crushed or not to be crushed."

Inmates fought to be evacuated from the central compounds — "the horror camp" — and thus there were hourly stampedes. Derrick Sington wrote, "These people had become so conditioned to the terrible struggle for survival that they still reacted to a situation as in the days of the SS ... Only by fighting one's way to a transport could one stay with one's sister or friend."

Yet most Belsen inmates remained too sick to travel anywhere. Scores still died, to lie mingled with the living until they were noticed and borne away. On May 2, 100 hundred volunteer students from London medical schools were flown in. Like all newcomers, they were stunned by what they saw. In their ignorance, at first they did not even understand that most of the prisoners were Jewish. Some of the inmates still lay in their own faeces, incapable of movement.

The students became accustomed to ceaseless feeble groans: "Herr Doktor, bitte schön. Herr Doktor ... Herr Doktor." "My mother and sister were burnt alive in Auschwitz." "My husband was flogged to death by the SS." Three weeks after Belsen's "liberation", there were still few drugs available for the prisoners except opium and aspirin. Bed pans were in such short supply that they had to be reused as feeding tins. There were no anaesthetics.

One student, Michael Hargrave, opened a woman's breast abscess with a razor blade which he heated in a flame, then cooled in alcohol. Another student said later, "Almost overnight we had to move from the schoolboy values of what was right and what was proper ... to this new position, realising for the first time that there is evil in mankind."

Among the women inmates, morale rose when a consignment of lipstick was distributed. A doctor recorded the pathos of seeing a woman laid out for examination on a post-mortem table, one dead hand still clutching a lipstick. There was joy among those who began to grow breasts again and to menstruate. A number of the least damaged pursued sexual encounters. One woman wrote, "Some sought love because it made them feel like human beings again. Then there were those who sold their bodies for cigarettes, chocolates and other small comforts."

In May there was a brief resurgence of typhus. By the time the last inmates left Camp I, 13,000 had died since it was nominally liberated. Among thoughtful eyewitnesses, it became a frequent observation that the British expected gratitude for what they did, and were aggrieved that they did not receive it. The inmate Odette Rosenstock was a French doctor. She thought the British "understood nothing. It seemed to them that they were looking after a zoo inhabited by savage beasts, with dominant species and the mess of the dying, an antediluvian zoo where it was as natural to dominate as to die." The British strove to show kindness but "I had the impression that they considered themselves representatives of a higher civilisation".

It seems a valid plea in mitigation for the shortcomings of the liberators of Belsen that the Americans did no better in caring for former camp inmates in their own sector of Germany. At Buchenwald, a week after the first GIs arrived, more than half the 48,000 inmates who had met them were dead.

It seems quite mistaken to castigate those who tried to succour the camp inmates after the allies overran them. Responsibility lay unequivocally with the Germans. But it is dismaying to acknowledge how hard it proved for the peoples of the democracies to come to terms with the enormity of what had taken place.

Richard Dimbleby fought with the BBC hierarchy for three days before he could secure the transmission of his dispatch from Belsen, in a truncated and sanitised form, after the correspondent threatened to resign if it was suppressed. When a senior officer who had worked at the camp returned to England on leave, he found himself attending a cinema in which newsreel images were screened. He heard a woman in the row before him confide to her neighbour, "I suppose they stacked the bodies like that for the pictures." ■

Extracted from Plunder *by Max Hastings (William Collins, £25), published on September 24. To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk. Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for Times+ members*

‘I was caught having sex in the Groucho Club, but in my defence, she was sober, and I’d just come from a nine-hour lunch. We did it again there the following week’

NO RESERVATIONS

What would sober Gen Z think? In the Nineties, London’s restaurants were the scenes of fun, debauchery and heavy drinking. In his new book, Dylan Jones, the former editor of GQ, reveals what really went on under the banquettes at the Atlantic, Le Caprice and the Ivy

Atlantic Bar & Grill, 2000

Dylan Jones, 2013

Naomi Campbell, 1997

David and Victoria Beckham, 1999

Marco Pierre White and Damien Hirst, 1997

It is surprising how many people have had sex in restaurants. In lavatories. In broom cupboards (Boris Becker). On bars. And sometimes actually in the dining room. Having just spent 18 months writing and researching the social history of the London restaurant, I've been amazed at what I discovered. There was the travel PR who serviced an entire table of journalists in the downstairs restaurant of the Groucho Club; the globally renowned superchef who was captured on CCTV buggering a man who was very much not his wife (on the hotplate too); and, of course, Peter Langan, the famous restaurateur who was once caught pleasuring a female diner on the bar in his eponymous restaurant in the Seventies.

"I had sex in so many restaurants," said the legendary DJ Fat Tony when I asked him. "Upstairs at Langan's, Quaglino's, the Atlantic, everywhere. Sex was always more important than food to me. I f***ed everywhere. I joined the Mile High Club of restaurant toilets. I only used to drink; I never ate. I just used to push a caesar salad around the plate. Everyone was on drugs at the time. I threw up all over the Atlantic — on the stairs, in Dick's Bar [the Atlantic's 'secret' club], everywhere."

Many other stories involve the Atlantic Bar & Grill, Oliver Peyton's enormous postmodern Soho gin palace, which opened with great fanfare in 1994 just off Piccadilly Circus. The Atlantic was a celebrity haunt that regularly attracted the likes of Bono, Liam Gallagher, Francis Ford Coppola, Ben Elton, Lenny Henry, Kate Moss, Madonna, Robert De Niro and Naomi Campbell. At the time, the Atlantic was the largest restaurant in London, but still impossible to get into. It became so debauched so quickly (it had a late licence, and cocaine was the contemporary drug of choice — although obviously not for anyone mentioned in this piece) that it rapidly developed a reputation for brazen fornication. Most nights of the week there were threesomes in the toilets, and — crazy as it sounds today — it wasn't unusual to find a couple having sex at their table. One Thursday night, about midnight, a security guard tracked down Peyton to tell him a couple were going at it on a table right by the bar. Peyton arrived to find a City boy, his pinstriped trousers around his ankles, attending to his date in full view of the 50 or so remaining diners.

"Leave them to it," Peyton said. "I don't see anyone complaining."

As for myself, I have to admit to a bit of previous. I was once caught having sex in the Groucho Club, but in my defence, she was sober, and I'd just come from a nine-hour lunch. Although we did it again there the following week.

After interviewing more than 100 people for the book, one thing became paramount, something I hadn't really considered before. For people who were there, and especially people who weren't there, the Eighties and Nineties are considered to be the peak of the London restaurant scene, a time when the city was full of money, celebrities and drugs. It was the decade of Britpop, the YBAs, New Labour and *Trainspotting*. And every night of the week, Soho was full of people doing things they'd never done before and would never dream of doing again. It was also the last decade before the advent of social media, so you knew there was going to be no evidence.

"We went to the Atlantic every night, although I never took drugs," said Katie Grand, the fashion guru behind a dozen trendy magazines. "There was a running joke that if you went to the toilet in the Atlantic on a Friday night at about seven, and if you were quick, you could make 20, 30, 40 quid from all the rolled-up £10 notes."

The extraordinary thing was the fact that many famous people didn't appear to mind behaving badly in public.

"The key thing from a newspaper point of view was that cocaine reduced all the stars' inhibitions and made them put their barriers down," said Piers Morgan, who was then editing the Daily Mirror. "It made them behave very badly, which was always good copy. More importantly, it shattered their protective shields to prying eyes from paparazzi and journalists. So, in a way, it was a devil drug for the stars of the Nineties because it transported them straight onto the pages of the gossip columns. To younger people it made them look slightly dangerous, slightly anarchic, slightly cool. What they got up to at two in the morning in the Groucho Club, snorting coke off the snooker table, would be unthinkable now. I just think they revelled in it. I'm not sure it was any different from what Elton John or Freddie Mercury used to do, as no one partied harder than Freddie, but I think they all totally embraced the culture. I think they had a bloody good time, and if they can remember what they did and where they were in the Nineties, then they really didn't push it hard enough."

There was one celebrity hangout in Notting Hill called 192, which, not long after it opened, earned the soubriquet "One line or two". And even upmarket places like Le Caprice, in St James's, which was Princess Diana's favourite restaurant, had its purple patch. A Condé Nast colleague took his mistress to Le Caprice for lunch one day, a PR girl who looked after several big luxury clients. On arrival at the restaurant he was shocked, and quietly ecstatic, that on this occasion he'd been given Princess Diana's table, where he could be as public and as private as he needed to be. His way of celebrating his good fortune was to order a bottle of champagne and start playing with his girlfriend under the table, something he continued to do throughout lunch. As they both became more and more excited, so they ordered more and more champagne. About ten years later he told me their adventure hadn't ended there, and that after lunch they had returned to the Westbury Hotel in Conduit Street where they whiled away the rest of the day.

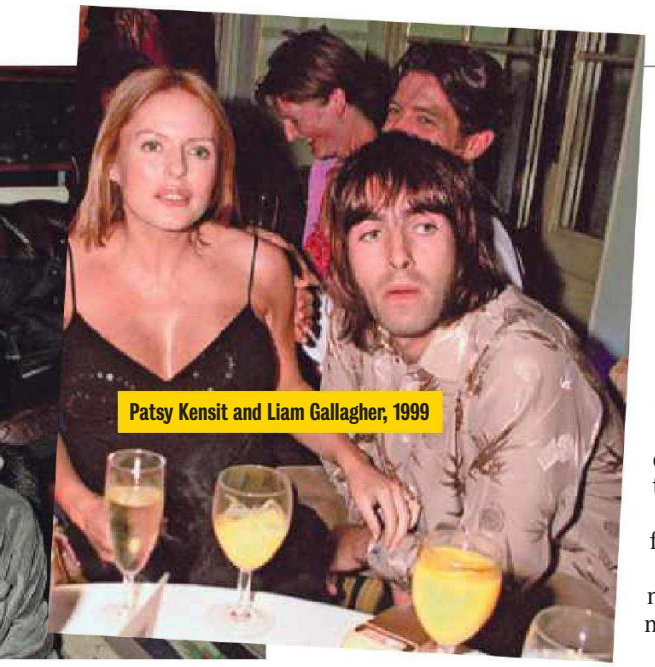
Le Caprice is where I would take people when I worked at GQ, where Naomi Campbell was nearly an hour late for dinner (I paid), and where I was surreptitiously papped having lunch with a scarlet woman who was having a very public affair with a cabinet minister. Le Caprice is where I saw my publishing director bet the marketing director of a major department store (no, not that one; the other one) that she couldn't take her bra off without removing her shirt. She did it, and I've still got no idea how. Le Caprice is where I saw its legendary mâitre d', Jesus Adorno, conjure up an extra table (seemingly out of nowhere) because Tina Brown had just walked in.

Freddie Mercury and Rod Stewart, 1990

Kate Moss and Jo, Leah and Ronnie Wood, 1999

THE ATLANTIC RAPIDLY DEVELOPED A REPUTATION FOR BRAZEN FORNICATION

PREVIOUS SPREAD: GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY. THIS SPREAD: SHUTTERSTOCK, GETTY IMAGES



Patsy Kensit and Liam Gallagher, 1999

soon became the hot ticket. One night, an extremely loud American customer started clicking his fingers at one of the waitresses. He felt he wasn't getting the right amount of attention and so started badgering the staff. At one point he stood up and clicked his fingers at a very voluptuous Eastern European waitress, who looked as though she was at the end of her tether. She obviously ignored him, but then he did it again. Eventually she went up to his table.

"Didn't you see me click my fingers?" he asked.

"Oh yes," she said, "but it takes more than two fingers to make me come."

I've never seen anything like it; he literally produced it in 90 seconds, like one of those amphetamine-fuelled waiters in *Goodfellas*.

One of the biggest culinary stars of the period was Marco Pierre White, the bad boy of the London restaurant scene, who opened his famous place Harveys in 1987. He was an autocrat in the kitchen, and an autocrat in the dining room too.

"Why did I throw people out of my restaurant?" Marco said when I quizzed him about his bad behaviour. "If customers were rude to my staff, they had to go. Have you ever sat next to a table in a restaurant and they're swearing and being rude and abusive? And the restaurant does f*** all. I have a problem with that. I'd have a word with them and ask them to keep it down. But imagine it's a Thursday night in Harveys and a table with six men, and they've done a deal and they're swearing and being mouthy, and there's a table for two next to them who ask them to calm down. And if they didn't, they had to go. If they were rude to the staff, they had to go."

One of the things that have enlivened the London restaurant scene over the past few decades has been the wonderful feuds it has engendered, often between critics and chefs. The Sunday Times critic AA Gill and Gordon Ramsay famously hated each other.

"I knew Gill and Fay Maschler, and they were very anti-me," Ramsay said. "With Adrian it was because he was off shooting pheasant and grouse with Marco every weekend, so I got f***ed five ways. They were brutal c***s. There was a horrendous piece in the Sunday Times with the headline 'The foul-mouthed footballer who had a shotgun wedding'. So when Gill came in for dinner, I threw him out. I went up to the table and said hello to Joan Collins, and then asked Adrian to f*** right out of my restaurant. I'd had a bellyful, so I wasn't going to put up with it any more."

Jeremy King and Chris Corbin bought the Ivy in 1989, relaunching it a year later, and it immediately became the prime power lunch spot in town. If you were lucky enough to get a table, this

IT WAS A HEIGHTENED PERIOD WHEN WAITERS STARTED TO ACT LIKE STARS

The Evening Standard's restaurant critic, Fay Maschler, says that because Marco quickly became known for his temper, there was a tension to eating in Harveys, which she quite enjoyed. "He never threw me out or anything, but he did say at a later date that I wouldn't give him five stars because he refused to sleep with me. Which is a slur, but the more you try to get out of that, the deeper you dig yourself in."

It was a heightened period when even respectable restaurants had an air of danger about them, and when doormen, maître d's and waiters started to act like stars themselves. Kensington Place was another restaurant that opened in 1987, a huge greenhouse in Notting Hill, which automatically guaranteed you access to the most exclusive non-members' club in London. You couldn't guarantee where you were seated, and you may have been given one of the second-division tables by the window on the far wall, but at least you were in the first-division restaurant.

In its pomp, the Ivy was probably the most star-studded restaurant in the world. Blur's Alex James remembers having lunch there with Damien Hirst and Keith Allen in 1998. It was about 9pm and they'd been there since 1pm.

"I've still got the receipt, and it's like a bog roll. It was thousands of pounds and it was all drinks, apart from some French fries we had at six o'clock."

They were celebrating because Woolworths had just put in an initial order for a quarter of a million copies of *Vindaloo*, the football song they had written three weeks earlier to coincide with the World Cup.

"David and Victoria Beckham walked in and sat down for dinner. At that time, he was about the best footballer in the world and she was in about the biggest band in the world, and they weren't even given the best table. It was reserved for Harold Pinter, who arrived shortly afterwards. We were like, f***ing hell! I mean, eight hours into a lunch at the Ivy at nine o'clock at night — that was peak Nineties for me. I don't know if I will ever top that."

The Atlantic, however, remains the most debauched restaurant that London has had. "I think Liam Gallagher had to be asked to leave a couple of times," Oliver Peyton said, sounding almost wistful. "I remember Bill Murray standing in reception in a pair of Adidas sweatpants, and I could tell the girl hadn't recognised him. Famous people would come in at six o'clock in the evening and sit there for two or three hours reading a book. One night I was in Dick's Bar with Björk, Damien Hirst, Damien's mum, Tracey Emin and Sarah Lucas. Björk decided she didn't like the music we were playing and so tried to change it. As soon as she stopped the music, glasses started flying across the bar. We never found out who threw them.

"I was in the Groucho with Alexander McQueen and Ruby Wax one night and I asked him why he never came to the Atlantic. And he said, 'I can never get in,'" Peyton continues. "So we go down there, I lift up the velvet rope and the security guy goes, 'Where do you think you're going?' The staff loved that. One night I was having a drink with Sarah Lucas and Shane MacGowan, and I left at six o'clock to go out to dinner. I came back the next day at the same time and they were still there. I don't know how they managed that, but they certainly looked like they'd been up for a while."

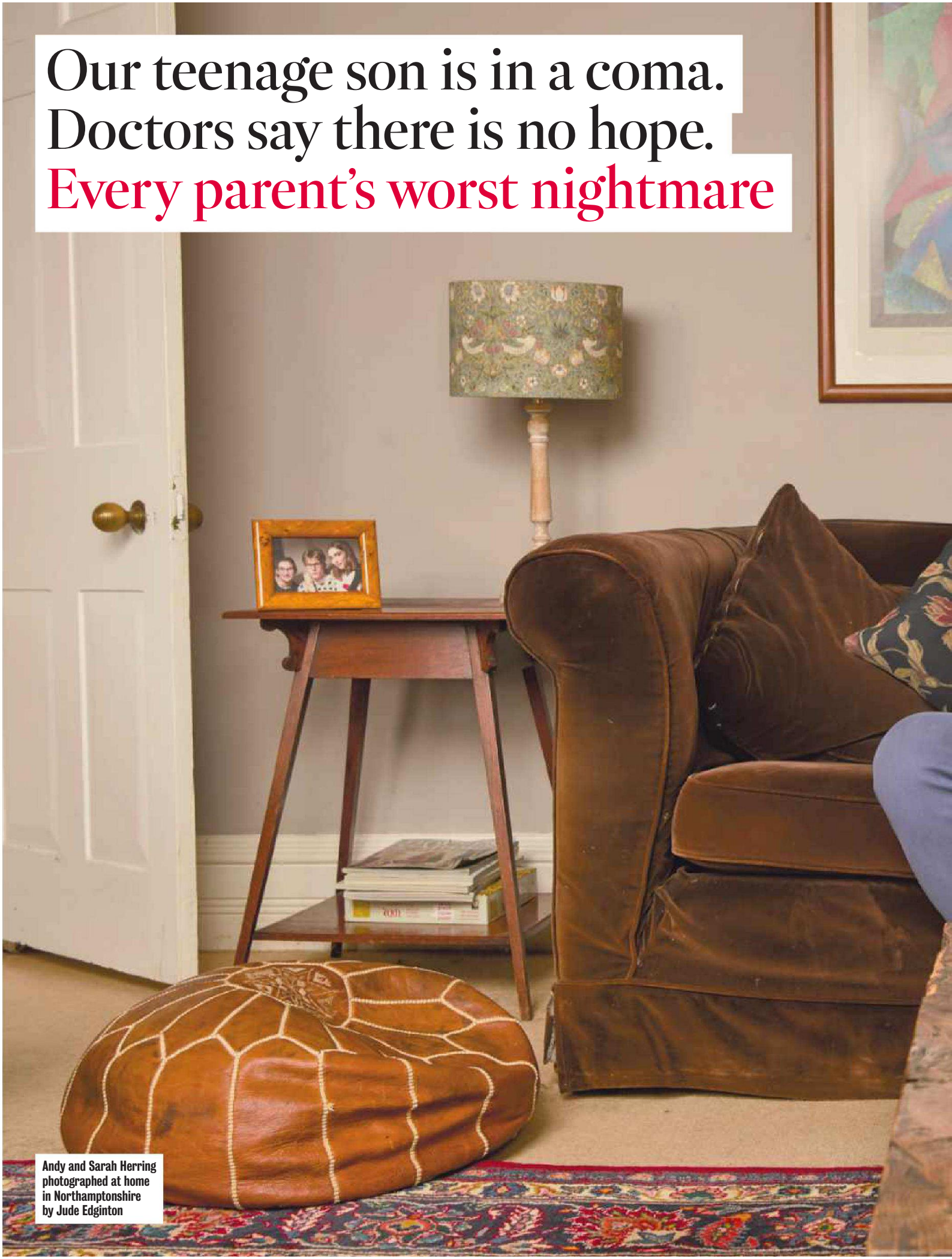
These days, sex no longer appears to be on the menu. Last summer, as I was finishing the book, I sat next to Richard Dennen, the editor of Tatler, in a hospitality suite at Wimbledon.

"Have you ever had sex in a restaurant?" I asked.

"Oh no," he said, proudly. "I'm too vanilla." ■

Table Hopping: The Secret History of London Restaurants, from Langan's Brasserie to the Wolseley *by Dylan Jones is published on October 1 (Constable, £30). To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935. Special discount available for Times+ members*

Our teenage son is in a coma. Doctors say there is no hope. Every parent's worst nightmare



Andy and Sarah Herring photographed at home in Northamptonshire by Jude Edginton

Laurie Herring was 17 when his father found him unresponsive at home. What followed were months in intensive care — the doctors arguing that he'd never recover and his parents, Andy and Sarah, believing that signs of life meant the medical team had a duty not to give up on him. This is their agonising diary

We named our third child Laurie. Laurence Patrick Roger.

Like his two older sisters, Laurie was born in London. But when he was six months old, we moved to the Northamptonshire countryside.

He did brilliantly in his GCSEs in the summer of 2019. Over the holidays after his exams, his mother, Sarah, and I went to Berlin with him. He'd chosen to do German A-level — and he loved the fact that at 16 he could order his own beer. It was a hopeful time, and Laurie seemed happy.

What we did not know was that Laurie must have been suffering profoundly. Still, looking back on October 24, 2019, it seems there was no particular reason on that day why Laurie would do such terrible damage to himself.

BEFORE

Wednesday, October 23, 2019

October half-term. I'm a lawyer and I've taken a week off work. Laurie is planning his first solo trip to Berlin. In the evening he goes to stay with a friend, and messages Sarah to ask if another friend can come with him to Berlin. There is no sign of any emotional issue.

Thursday, October 24

Sarah takes the train to a meeting in Sheffield and I go for an eye test in town. Laurie texts Sarah at about 7.30am to ask when she will be back. This is something Laurie would do. I leave the house just after 9am and Laurie arrives back not long after that. I call Laurie's mobile, but the call isn't answered — also not unusual: Laurie has a typical teenager's desire not to be pestered by his parents. After the eye test, I notice that Laurie called my mobile at 11.51 but the phone did not ring — I had silenced it during the test. It's just before noon when I begin walking home.

I arrive home and call out for Laurie. Initially, I think he's asleep, but he is concealed by the half-open bedroom door. When I go in, his back is to the door and he's wearing his blue dressing gown. I can't find a pulse or a heartbeat.

I sit in the back of a police car in the rain, speeding through all the reds and part of the way on the wrong side of the road. I am sure my son, Laurie, just 17 years old, will be dead by the time we arrive at the hospital.

AFTER

Day 1

Laurie is in a coma. We can't reach him.

The technical term is a prolonged disorder of consciousness, a PDOC, pronounced "pee doc". There are ranges within a PDOC, from vegetative, in a persistent vegetative state; PVS, in popular understanding a deep coma — nothing doing at all; to a condition of minimal consciousness, a minimally conscious state or MCS. Let's say, coma-plus. We're learning quickly.

Sarah mentions that, by surreal coincidence, she'd heard a radio programme while driving last week that featured an English professor called Dr Adrian Owen, who is able to identify consciousness in patients in a PDOC. Many thousands, he argues, are aware of their surroundings, their condition. It's inconceivable that we are having to begin thinking about these issues.

In the intensive treatment unit (ITU), we walk into the main arena, the cockpit of Fate. Laurie is in his new state, his altered state, the condition that will now define him. He is splayed across the bed, for ever changed, a semi-machine as monitors ping around him. A team in blue scrubs is moving rapidly around Laurie, everyone focused. I hear someone talking about the need for a code word, in case the press call. Teenage suicides are high profile.

In the family room, a doctor tells us that what Laurie had done in all probability caused a cardiac arrest. This would have interrupted the oxygen supply to his brain. After a short time, probably no more than three minutes, this would cause irreversible damage to motor functions. A hypoxic brain injury. Compare that with a trauma injury, where even if the damage was severe, the brain could, might, find workarounds. All those miracle recoveries from brain injuries you've read and heard about? Trauma injuries, not hypoxic.

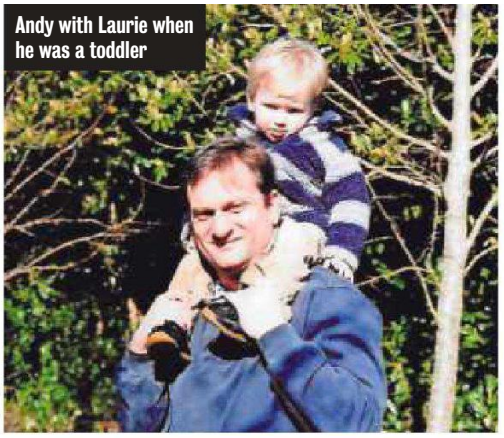
The doctor explains the standard procedure. This team prides itself on honesty from the start, he says. For 72 hours, they'll do everything they can. If any hard decisions have to be taken, they will take them. In 72 hours. We see no reason to question that approach. We hang on to the medics' every word. We almost love them.

Time is all mixed up. There's no daylight in here. Only a change of shifts, a change of faces, tells you that time has moved on.

We're calling people, telling them the news. It's impossible to speak without being overcome with hot, searing tears. You dread the pain that you are about to cause another — your call will change their life too.

I ask the first nurse over and over again, obsessively, "You've seen people recover from this before?" Yes, she says. Noncommittal. She has been trained to deal with me. I don't ask her if she has seen people not recover from this.

An electroencephalogram machine (EEG) shows electrical activity going on. Laurie is in standby mode. A camp bed has been placed in his bay, so that we can sleep with him. Laurie is alive.



Andy with Laurie when he was a toddler

A consultant comes to give me the spiel: there is no hope. I have never felt more broken

Day 2

The morning rounds. A group of medical students walk around the patients with the consultant. They all pause by Laurie's bed. His limbs are now postured, his damage worn in public. The students stare at Laurie, and there is a quiet stillness. Their first suicide attempt? He is only a little younger than them; their kid brother. I smile at them, and try to be positive. I try to break the ice, so they don't feel too bad. This is where I am, still. They must think I'm insane.

Day 3

The first test. Can Laurie breathe unaided? They take him off the ventilator. He does! He holds the line. A wild hope runs through me, that now he's breathing he'll sit up, maybe there'll be damage, but nothing compared with the impossibility of seeing him go. He's only just 17.

We're playing music to Laurie, trying to find the spark that will show us that he's there. We get responses but these are inconsistent. The deadline is looming and the brutal economic fences beginning to emerge. Choices have to be made. How much is too much to spend on a life which now only clings to a thread? How much treatment — painful and intrusive and perhaps doomed to ultimate failure (but define failure) — is too much?

Laurie is taken for an MRI while on life support. All this 24-hour, one-on-one care, all this kit humming and blinking away, and the newest drugs — full-on, state-of-the-art intervention — it all costs just about as much as it's possible to spend on one person. And then there is the question of after: once saved, will he become an annuity cost loaded onto the social care sector? How can his life be valued in terms of quality-adjusted life years — QALYs — the British state's standard

COURTESY OF ANDY AND SARAH HERRING. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: ARIANE YOUNG AT JOY GOODMAN USING BEAUTY OF JOSEON AND GOLDWELL STYLESIGN

Laurie with his sisters, Rebecca and Anna, Christmas 2018

tool for assessing whether a patient is worth spending money on?

It feels like something changes. A campaign of messaging starts. The time for pressure is in the morning rounds: negative looks, downbeat comments.

The results of the MRI are not good. It shows the widespread nature of Laurie's injury. The neurologist who delivers the news is accompanied by a nurse witness. She is upset, red-eyed, silent.

We debate that although the MRI can map how many square miles have been flooded, it isn't a geological survey, it can't tell you how deep the damage is. It doesn't tell you what can be recovered and what cannot.

The neurologist catches my eye. As we both look at Laurie, a shadow of intense emotion crosses his face.

Day 4

Laurie — we — have become bed blockers. Fabulists, unable to confront reality.

What appears to be a determined daily cycle of breaking us down, the Programme, has now really begun. Laurie has had his 72 hours, and even though he is young and breathing, he is seemingly someone to be lost, not saved.

There are two ways in which we can be dead, brain-dead and heart-dead, though of course at some point these become one. Laurie is neither, though he is unarguably brain-injured. But exactly how injured, we don't know. This is our misfortune. We are being asked to decide on the basis of uncertainties that are presented as certainties.

It appears that the key aim of any engagement, from now on, is to persuade us that there is no hope, and that we are irrational, delusional and cruel to subject Laurie to the impossible goal of recovery. It seems to us as though the whole team is expected to work on this.

A nurse offers me a discount card for the restaurant. As she fills in the card she waves it towards Laurie and says, "You won't need more than five days will you, you know ...?"

The camp bed next to Laurie is removed. We are not allowed to continue our delusional vigil.

Week 2

I'm sitting with Sarah's brother, Steve, who is a former NHS doctor.

A consultant comes to give me the spiel: there is no hope. I have never felt more broken. I feel like giving in, just to make it stop.

Another tells us that he has never discharged a hypoxic neuro patient from ITU. This is terrifying, and we are terrified. He tells us that Laurie needs a tracheostomy — a breathing tube — if he is to leave ITU, but that nobody will take him if he has a "trachie". It appears that the official line — in this ITU — is that the profoundly brain-injured stay and die here because there is nowhere for them to go.

But Steve has already googled this: there definitely exist neuro-rehab units that take patients with trachies.

What they want us to do is withdraw Laurie's clinically assisted nutrition and hydration (CANH). That will soon do its work and free up the bed. In the absence of legal sanction for honestly labelled euthanasia, hospitals appear to have developed a series of protocols.

But what are our duties to our son?

I consult a KC and an intensive care specialist. Their view is that this team is violating official guidelines from the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), which suggest that Laurie should be given 4,380 hours — six months — to show signs of recovery before a definitive prognosis or decision to withdraw CANH can be made. In the meantime, there should be specialist assessments, second opinions and best interests meetings, formally documented.

It's too early. That's what the guidelines say. But we feel like we are being conditioned to own a decision that would be made by other people for us, under duress.

Monday, November 4 (day 11)

8.30am. ITU. We can see signs from Laurie, his eyes tracking as we sit with him.

Word seems to have been passed around that we seem a little more certain of our resistance. There is now a palpable stand-off. Laurie is a problem. We are a problem.

Two hospital psychologists check in on Sarah and me. They are kind, concerned for our wellbeing. Why? Perhaps because no one is expected to successfully swim against the tide of settled ITU opinion. Surely we're on the brink of conforming?

But nothing has changed in Laurie's condition. He is breathing on his own. We just need the team to fit him with a trachie, the necessary precondition to any form of survival beyond ITU — to any kind of morally defensible decision in relation to Laurie.

One of the Psy Team asks me how my mental health is: I tell her I am profoundly tired, angry and terrified that Laurie will be slipped away from us. If anyone is truly concerned about my mental health, they would stop this campaign of pressure. I suggest that this team isn't following the guidelines. They don't hold best interests meetings; they do their own thing.

Later, I see that they have written up that the family feel like they're being bullied. I feel relieved and, to my surprise, my diatribe has some kind of effect. Later, Laurie has a trachie fitted — and a doctor announces that there will be a formal best interests meeting! Steve, Sarah and I present our folder of research. They don't fight.

It is agreed: Laurie is to be transferred to the high-dependency unit (HDU), where you go when you're on a journey which hopefully ends, in some form, back in the real world. Laurie isn't going to die in the ITU.

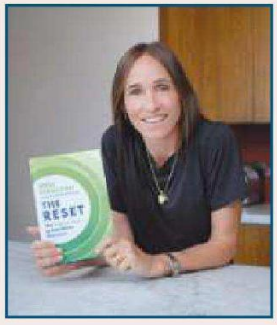
We are insanely elated. We go to a new restaurant in town and laugh hysterically. We celebrate. We feel like we have won, that now there is no way that, in time, Laurie won't be back with us.

November 9, 2019

Laurie is transferred to the HDU on the other side of the hospital. We feel a dizzying, fleeting sense of relief ➡

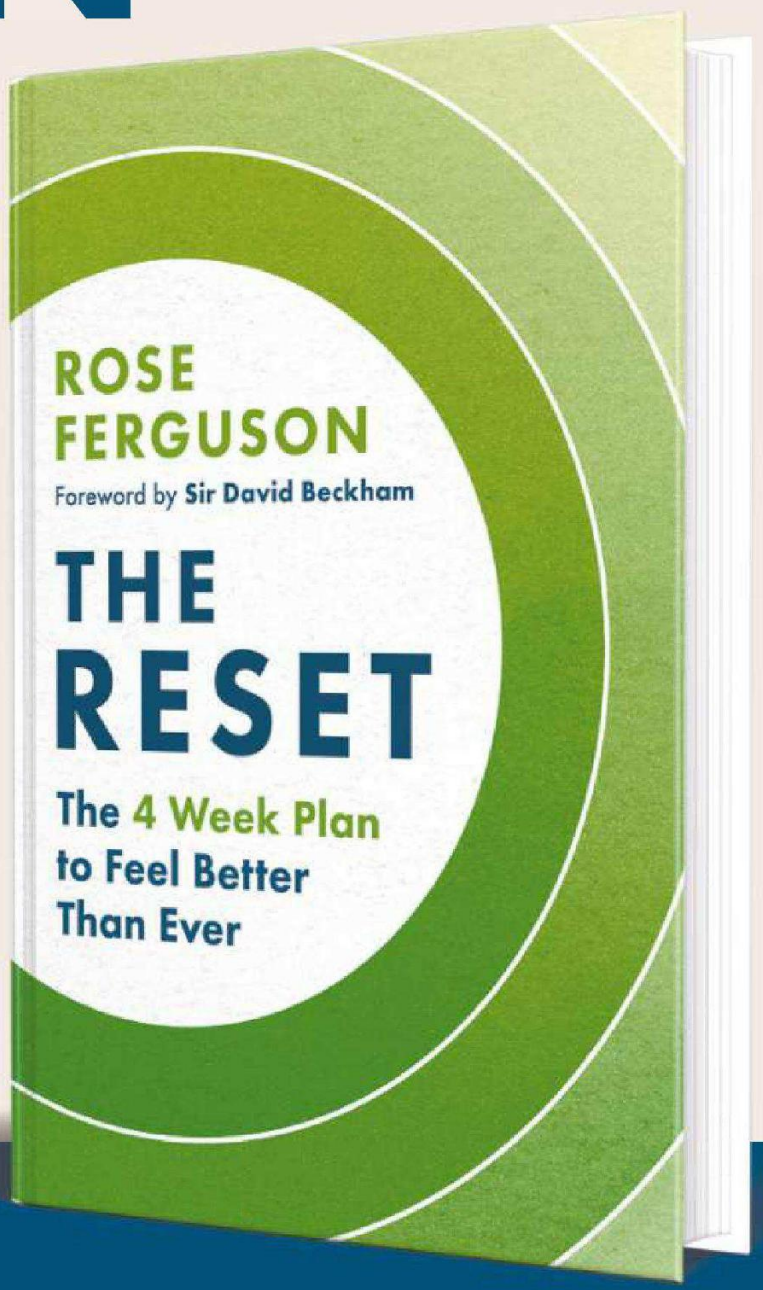
FEEL LIKE YOURSELF AGAIN

IN JUST 4 WEEKS



'Rose cuts through the noise with science, warmth and hard-won clinical wisdom'

Dr Federica Amati



Available from
WATERSTONES

Proud to support The National Year of Reading 2026.

GO ALL IN.

— not because he is out of danger, but because we have bought him time.

But new threats emerge. In ITU, the threats are immediately existential. In the acute wards there's infection and deficiencies in nutrition and hydration.

Laurie's grip on life remains razor-thin. While his brain consumes vast amounts of energy, he starts "storming". His flight-or-fight reflex goes into permanent overdrive and he lies bathed in sweat, his heart rate soaring, his restless body burning through calories at an alarming rate.

Laurie begins to waste away. He drops from 9st 4lb down to a terrifying 6st 4lb. He is dying of malnutrition.

We battle the rigid hospital bureaucracy. When the chief dietician goes on holiday, we negotiate frantically with her cover, pleading until Laurie's daily allowance is finally bumped up to 1,900 calories. It halts his decline, but the threat of infection hangs over every day.

November 18, 2019
Laurie moves to the general neurology ward. We search obsessively for any sign that our boy is still in there. When Bacchus, a therapy labrador, visits the ward, Laurie smiles — a real, unmistakable smile.

Christmas 2019
Sarah and I sit by Laurie's bedside. That evening, back at our flat, we eat a turkey dinner from M&S.

January 2020
A professor we have come to know through our research campaign agrees to take Laurie into her specialist hyper-acute unit in north London.

March 2020
A place called Wuhan is in the news. A virus is spreading globally. Inside this north London hospital there is a surreal sense of inaction. Hundreds of visitors stream through the corridors; the lifts are crammed; the canteen remains packed.

A patient in the bay next to Laurie's develops a fever. Whispers spread: it's Covid.

Panic sets in, but resources are non-existent. I watch Laurie's nurse prepare to enter the isolation rooms. Lacking basic PPE, she wraps a plastic bin bag around her head like a turban and ties others around her legs like makeshift snowshoes.

March 24, 2020
Lockdown has been declared. Sarah and I drive down a deserted motorway to London. When we reach the ward, the sister blocks the entrance: "What are you doing here? You have to go."

Out of pity, a doctor grants us 20 minutes. Laurie lies in bed, 17 years old, a child, profoundly disabled and alone. We are being forced to leave him, knowing he might die without us ever touching

Laurie's 18th birthday. He is briefly permitted home. We laugh, we sing. Laurie smiles

his hand again. A doctor, tears in her eyes, stands in the doorway. I look back one last time at Laurie.

April-August 2020
Our only window to Laurie is through short, agonising FaceTime calls. Kind nurses hold up their phones in his room so we can speak into the digital void: "Can you hear us, Laurie? Can you blink?" We spend all day waiting for a three-minute call, and the rest of the day haunted by what we saw.

At the end of March, Laurie is transferred to a hospital in the Midlands. We drive through the deserted countryside just to stand on the pavement outside his ground-floor window, staring through the glass at our boy, his flaxen hair now grown long like a pre-Raphaelite painting.

But this hospital also pushes to clear his bed. A spot opens up at a private equity-owned neuro-rehabilitation facility, and it will take Laurie.

September 24, 2020
Laurie's 18th birthday. For a few brief hours, he is permitted to come home in a wheelchair. We hang our faded family birthday banner. We sing, we laugh. Laurie smiles.

Back at the facility, outside his window, heavy construction begins on a new building. Tower cranes and earth-movers roar just metres from his room. Laurie, hypersensitive to noise, goes into constant physical extension, his heart rate spiking. The staff increase his doses of heavy central nervous system depressants.

When we are allowed brief visits, we bring a small speaker. I play him the sound of a dawn chorus. As birdsong fills the room, Laurie's eyes open wide. I ask him to play his imaginary tennis match — an exercise for people in a PDOC. Laurie slowly, deliberately moves his arms in response. He is in there!

By May 2021, we have approved home-care funding and a builder lined up. We are preparing to bring Laurie home.

May 18, 2021
Laurie's sisters, Rebecca and Anna, are allowed to visit their brother for the first time in 14 months.

May 20, 2021
I play Laurie a recording of Richard Burton reading John Donne's *The Sun Rising*. I talk to him and hold him. He seems bright and engaged.

Around 4pm, I notice he feels clammy. I assume it is from the physical exertion of our session. I kiss him goodbye. "I'll see you tomorrow, Laurie," I tell him.

Friday, May 21, 2021
1am: Sarah's mobile phone shatters the dark. It is the night nurse. There is an emergency — Laurie is on his way to the acute unit of another hospital.

We explain everything: the initial injury, his fight in ITU, his survival against the odds, his consciousness, our hope.

Laurie is fighting an overwhelming infection. His breathing is terrifying — panicked, violent, his whole chest heaving for air. His eyes are open, but they are cloudy, staring into the distance.

At 8am, a doctor in blue scrubs steps out into the corridor. "This is a consultant's worst nightmare," he says quietly. "Coming into this at the start of a shift ..."

I know Laurie's body is powering down. I don't want Sarah's last memory of him to be a chaotic scene of chest compressions and medical violence.

At 8.13am, the door opens. The doctor looks at us. He doesn't need to say the words.

The machines are gone. The chaotic noise has vanished. Laurie's face bears the faint hint of his familiar, wry smile. The set of his jaw is peaceful. In many ways, without the tracheostomy tubes and monitors, he looks more like Laurie than he has in 18 months.

We were not there with him when his heart stopped. Why not? Everything happened so fast.

We hold him. We touch his face and call his name over and over. Laurie, Laurie, Laurie. ■

Four months after Laurie's funeral in June 2021, the coroner's office released a delayed toxicology report to the Herring family. A sample was taken nearly a week after his death.

The results contained a shocking revelation: Laurie's blood contained six times the maximum safe therapeutic limit of gabapentin, a nerve painkiller. A heavy central nervous system depressant had also been co-prescribed off-label alongside other potent sedatives, including fentanyl.

The family also discovered that, just two weeks before Laurie's death, a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection at Laurie's neuro-rehabilitation facility had uncovered systemic failures.

A formal inquest into the death of Laurie Herring was opened.

The Undiscovered Country: Grief, Justice and the Hidden Territories of End of Life Care *by Andrew Herring (Whitefox, £18.99). Order from timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935*

Eating out
Giles Coren

‘I’d go back to Tower House for the general feeling of fun and the view. It’s like being in the Cap d’Antibes’

TOM JACKSON

Tower House/Banquet 88

It’s a dull weekend, you’re a Londoner, you’ve got the kids on your hands, you want to get out for most of the day, you want to eat, and you want food they will like but you’re not wasting your Saturday in a pizza joint. The main thing is the journey anyway, ideally a view of the Thames and some sense of adventure. What do you do?

A train ride to, say, Richmond, for a walk along the river and decent Mediterranean scran on a pretty terrace overlooking the water? Or go the other way, east, to Tower Bridge, stare down into the turbid, grey-green roil, stroll round the battlements, buy a fridge magnet and a themed quill, then go and look at the boats at St Katharine Docks and try a new dim sum joint right on the water that they say is good? I did both at the back end of the summer and can recommend one rather more than the other.

So let’s start with Richmond. It was one of the hot days and I wanted an outdoor table with a view. There was a place called Tower House just down from the bridge, six months old but unreviewed, a new departure from the people behind Gold on Portobello Road, whose tepid front of house I rollicked last year but otherwise quite liked. It was a Saturday morning, too late to book online and nobody answering the phone. So Sam and I went down on the off-chance on what is now called the Mildmay Line from Gospel Oak: a lovely ride, rattling through the sunny back gardens of Betjeman’s Metro-land all the way to what is, as far as I am concerned, deepest Surrey. And if Tower House couldn’t take us, or wasn’t there, we’d get a burger and go for a walk.

But it was, and it could. It’s a gorgeous old mid-Victorian clock tower near the bridge with a modest aspect to the main road that tumbles prettily down to the river on the other side; the sort of building that in places like Richmond usually ends up as a Zizzi or Pitcher & Piano (which I believe it actually was until recently). It’s a warren of rooms, bars and snugs and the like, penumbrous despite the bright day, attractively furnished and rammed with pot plants through which we felt our way like David Bellamy until we emerged into the dense shrubbery of a bustling terrace, humming with eaters and drinkers, some of them snuggled round big tables under gazebos and potted trees, others broiling in the sun right on the edge, toes all but dangling in the water.

“Wow,” said Sam.

“They’ll never have room,” said I.

“Hello!” said the manager, Bee (it’s short for Charlotte: “It’s complicated”). “What can I do for you?”

“Well,” I said. “Ideally, I’d like a two in the shade with a view of the river but erring on shade if it’s either/or.” I like to be clear with my needs and requirements; it’s easier for everyone in the end.

The terrace at Tower House

And so she showed us to a lovely table with a parasol, nestling in the greenery, where Sam had a soft banquette and the river view with its rowers and lawns and willow trees, and I had a view of him (which always makes me happy) and behind him the beautiful house, its stucco, iron balconies, gardens and plants and blue sky. It was breathtaking, like being in the Cap d'Antibes.

Our server, Kelly, was a local girl and, like us, a QPR fan. She said there was Estrella on tap or Monte Carlo in a bottle. I asked her what the Monte Carlo was like and she said "sort of Moretti vibes", so I had one of those.

The food came not super-rapidly, but quick enough for a busy day on a rammed river terrace in summer, and was brought by another QPR fan, by chance one I know from many a game both home and away: Charlie Young, son of my good friend and fellow Hoop, Lord Toby of Acton, whose grand manorial estate lies just to the north.

There was sea bass ceviche with basil and mint verjus and jalapeños that was good if a little salty, excellent jamon and manchego croquetas, and utterly historic polenta fries that were crispy, sharp-edged, sea-salted and swiped through a smoked paprika aïoli. Then pappardelle with beef shin ragu for Sam and a wonderful bowl of roast purple potatoes with pecorino pesto and pickled shallots. For my main I had the chargrilled squid with lemon and chilli and a pile of rocket, a River Cafe dish that is not quite there yet but was perfectly okay. And with the difference that, unlike at the RC, you can actually see the river while you're eating it.

This is a place I would go back to for the service, above all, and also the view and the general feeling of fun and to walk the length of the river to the next bridge again, over it, and back the other side, as Sam and I did afterwards, before the train home. I have wittily observed in the past that the standard of cooking in a restaurant tends to be inversely proportional to the quality of the view. But that is not true here. The food is absolutely as good as it needs to be and the view is quite unbeatable.

And then just last weekend, we went the other way down the Thames, with Kitty as well this time, where, after a stroll in the sunshine along that curious stretch where the towering Gherkin and Shard and Cheesegrater contrive to make the medieval Tower look even more like a theme park than the myriad theme-park castles it has inspired, we settled down at Banquet 88 with another nice view of water, this time of the marina at St Katharine Docks.

It's a big spare dining room with spartan lighting and is extremely "Hong Kong dim sum canteen" in that regard. But the cooking doesn't quite measure up to the hype. It was fine, and the kids think I'm mad ("Solid 8/10, Dad. Shut up"), but the casings on the dumplings were thicker than is ideal, many of them were the wrong side of piping hot, the xiao long bao were not as soup-filled as they might have been, the crispy red rice cheung fun were like pink condoms full of Jiffy-bag filler and the crystal scallop dumplings just didn't hold together at all, falling to pieces on contact with chopsticks.

When you order crispy calamari in a Chinese restaurant, it is in the expectation of a "chew yim" treatment, or something adjacent to that: small pieces rolled in cornflour and fried with chilli and garlic, not giant cross-sections, blandly beer-battered and piled up like onion rings. I did my best to ignore the strain of "luxury" ingredients that ran through the menu. I am too old and poor and cynical to seek out truffle and foie gras and caviar at lunchtime in a dim sum joint, or anywhere else. Although I did succumb to a "wagyu beef thousand-layer pastry" that was no better or worse (and admittedly no more expensive at £10 for three) than a decent high street char siu puff.

I thought their vaunted roast meats might bring it back and there was nothing wrong with the duck, except that the fat had rendered a little too much. But the char siu iberico pork was chewy and oversweet, not charred or smoky at all, like candied meat. And weirdly slimy.

Our main server was charming (though his adjutants were sloppy) and the location was top, but the cooking was not a patch on, say, Dim Sum Duck, reviewed here in April. If Banquet 88 were down the road, I'd go again on the basis that it might have been an aberration. But, river or no river, a middling Chinese in Wapping is no use to me at all. So if you're looking for lunch on the Thames this weekend, go west, my son. ■

Tower House
11 Bridge Street, TW9 (thisistowerhouse.com)

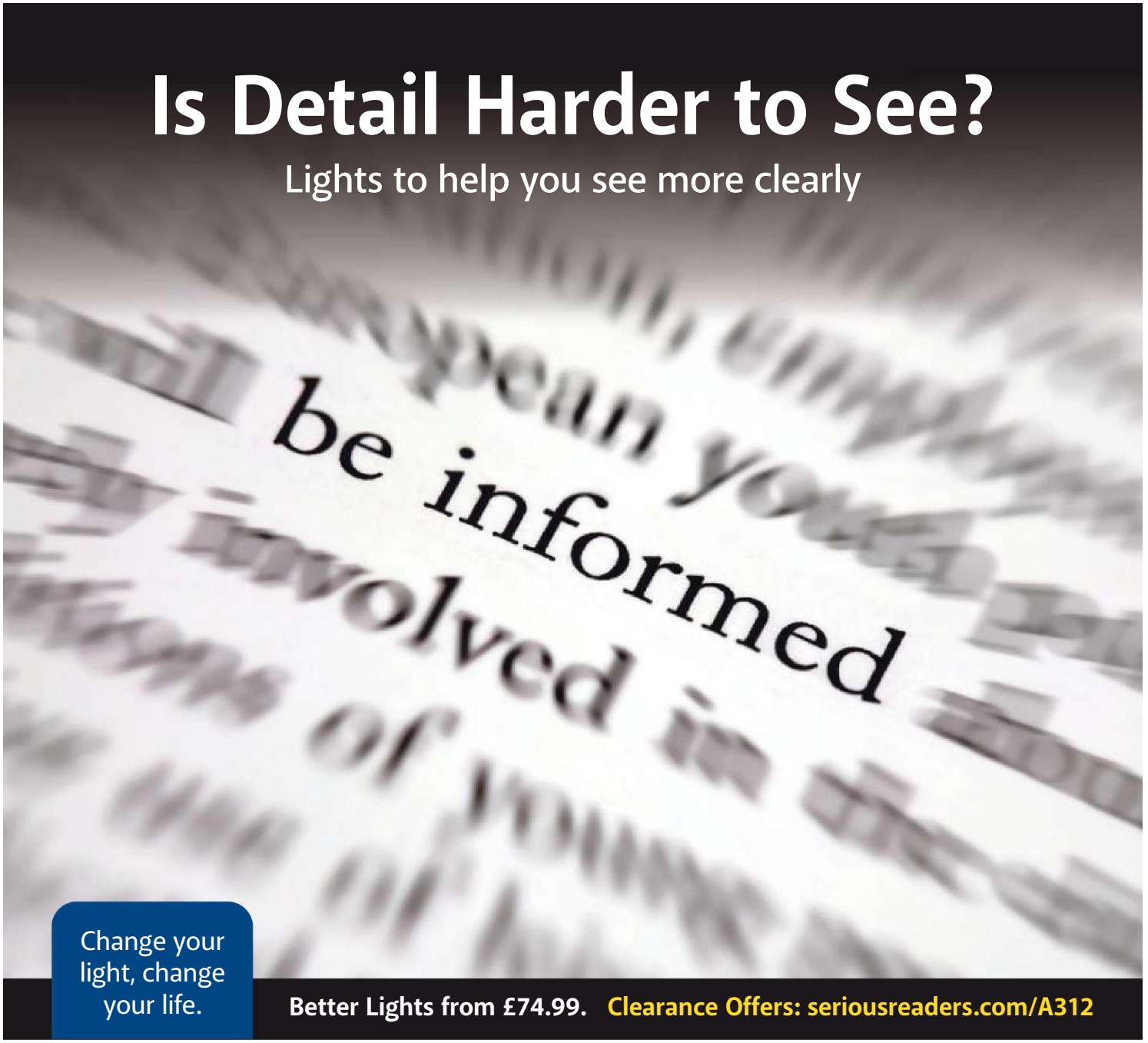
Cooking 7
Service 9
Location 10
Score 8.67
Price £115 for Sam and me, not counting booze.

Banquet 88
St Katharine Docks, E1 (banquet88.com)

Cooking 5
Service 6
Location 7
Score 6
Price £170 for Kitty, Sam and me. No booze was drunk.

Is Detail Harder to See?

Lights to help you see more clearly



Change your light, change your life.

Better Lights from £74.99. **Clearance Offers: seriousreaders.com/A312**

All Sight Is Light

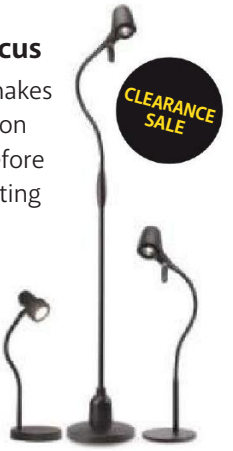
Every moment of sight begins with light. It shapes every colour, every face and every detail you experience. When the quality of light improves, so does the way you see, feel and engage with the world around you.

See Every Detail

Better light reveals what you've been missing. Colours appear richer, contrast becomes clearer and everyday tasks demand less effort. Your eyes stay comfortable for longer, leaving you free to focus on living instead of straining to see.

Don't Let Poor Light Steal Your Focus

Poor light quietly works against you. It makes your eyes work harder, drains concentration and turns simple tasks into tiring ones. Before you blame your eyes, make sure your lighting isn't the real problem.



No eye strain, no aching muscles from peering too hard. It has made a world of difference to my reading experience.

Mr Ramsden | West Yorkshire

Trustpilot

See the difference Up to 90 day Risk Free Trial

Recommended by Opticians 500+

feefo

For Advice. For a Brochure. To Order:

0800 085 1088

seriousreaders.com/A312

Serious® Serious about light™

FUTON
COMPANY
Double your useable space with our sofa beds & day beds
24 stores • futoncompany.co.uk • 0345 609 4455

Excellent ★★★★★ as of August 2026 ★ Trustpilot

Audika
Your hearing is our expertise

FREE
£10 M&S gift card*
Ends 30 November

Book a **FREE** hearing test

"I can't believe it's a hearing aid!"

Having difficulty keeping up in conversations? How about when talking on the phone, or in large groups?

Spectacle hearing aids could help, especially if you're unsure about traditional hearing aids.

Stylish frames that cleverly contain and disguise a digital hearing aid in the spectacle arms. They will slip easily into your pocket, purse or handbag. They are a remarkable invention that can help overcome two problems at once. While most don't mind wearing glasses, the same cannot be said for wearing a hearing aid. Some people can find it uncomfortable and unnatural to have a hearing aid in their ear, but that's not a problem with our revolutionary spectacle aids. So, if you want to enjoy the benefits of glasses and a hearing device, with minimal fuss, apply for a free information pack by sending the freepost coupon or call the number below.

FREEPHONE
0800 740 8800
please quote ref. DF9I-1 **www.specaids.org**

*Offer ends on 30 November 2026. Receive a free £10 M&S gift card when you book and attend a free hearing test with Audika. New customers only. Gift cards distributed on a first-come, first-served basis while stocks last. Over 19s only. For full terms and conditions, visit audika.co.uk/marks. **Spectacle hearing aid suitability will depend on the type of hearing loss you have. Details and information provided correct at time of print.

Please place the tear off in an envelope

Please post me free, without obligation, details of the spectacle hearing aids:

Title ..... First Name ..... Surname .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Postcode..... Tel No .....

Email .....

☐ **Yes, please –** I would like to receive SMS messages from Audika about their hearing care services.

☐ **Yes, please –** I would like to receive emails from Audika about their hearing care services.

You can opt out at any time. Visit audika.co.uk/pp to read our privacy policy

Send coupon today (NO STAMP REQUIRED) to: Freepost AUDIKA, for this to arrive back with us DF9I-1

ADVERTISEMENT

Nobody wants to get this wrong.

Selling something that matters to you should mean a fair price and people you can trust. No guessing. No slow, formal process. No spending your evenings photographing and listing it yourself, fielding offers from strangers.

Those hassles are exactly why many people leave things lying in cupboards and drawers. And they're exactly why we've designed our process to be straightforward from start to finish. In fact, many of our customers tell us they simply would not have sold their items any other way.

'Cash that I wouldn't have had without Vintage Cash Cow.' Shirley F., March 2026

We know that deciding to part with something is often the hardest step. The selling process shouldn't make that decision any harder. From expert appraisals to complete control over the final decision, we've designed every stage to give you confidence.

'From first contact to final settlement it was a first class experience.' C.M. - March 2026

And if you choose not to sell, we'll return your items free of charge and fully insured.

'They returned my box in pristine condition, even better than my arrangement.' Liz P. - June 2026

Free, tracked, fully insured postage. A no obligation cash offer for the whole box. No hidden fees. No pressure.

'Very happy, kept me informed all throughout the process and I got £278 for stuff that probably would have got thrown away... the money has gone towards a mobility scooter...' Georgie K. - June 2026

The process is simple.

1. Order your free Welcome Pack with free postage labels
2. Find a sturdy box, take a look at what we buy, carefully pack your old items
3. Send it free, tracked and fully insured
4. Receive one clear cash offer
5. Accept - get paid in 2 working days. Decline - your items are returned, insured, free of charge

Over 800,000 customers have sold with us. Rated Excellent on Trustpilot.

'If you're hesitating, don't. It's a no-nonsense process from start to finish.' Mrs D., June 2026

Beta male
Robert Crampton

‘I’m doomsday prepping Spam, corned beef and evaporated milk. Your basic back to the Seventies diet’

DAN KENNEDY

The government wants us to stockpile food and water at home in case of disruptions to the supply chain. This summer’s harvest was pants. A whistleblower at the national grid says power cuts are inevitable. Over in the Pacific, El Niño is brewing up its worst event yet, threatening floods this autumn and winter. The Russians keep mucking about with our undersea cables, burning down substations and cyberbombing some of our most treasured institutions, the NHS and Jaguar Land Rover among them. Everything’s going down the pan, just as I’ve been predicting. Thankfully, I ignored all the mockery, and got myself prepped in good time.

I make no apology. Perhaps you remember Bernard Woolley’s “irregular verbs” in *Yes Minister*? “I give confidential briefings, you leak, he has been charged under Section 2a of the Official Secrets Act”? Well, the same applies to stockpiling essential goods. “I judiciously prepare for the worst, you hoard, he’s panic-bought all the bog rolls in the local Tesco.”

A year or more ago, I started filling a “resilience cupboard” in my office at home. I’ve got massive barrels of water, the kind that fit on an office cooler. I’ve got tins of beans, pulses, sardines, mandarins, corned beef, evaporated milk and, yes, Spam. Your basic back to the Seventies diet, in fact. Say what you like, but there was only one fat kid per class in those days. OK, so in my class that was me, but my point stands. I also bought some chocolate-coated protein bars but I ate them.

Nicola, my wife, to whom I have delegated supplying the essentials of homegrown, self-generated power should we lose the grid (as already happens regularly in Kent), has bought a wind-up radio. Plus a torch. And a fair few batteries, even some of those massive bad boys that power camping lanterns and the like. She’s researching a petrol genny and solar-panel backpacks. She’s got a stash of candles as well, to recreate that authentic three-day-week miners’ strike vibe of our childhoods.

She said something also about attaching something to the inverter, but I didn’t understand what she meant. She did physics O-level, did Nicola, while I took biology as the soft science option. I know absolute jack about electricity.

We’ve already got a Faraday box we can use as protection from a cheeky Kremlin EMP strike. We got ours to stop car thieves blipping the key from the street, but it’ll work just as well against dastardly Vlad trying to take down our comms.

Got some meds laid in as well. And, being middle class, we already own a full suite of cold and wet weather clothing, plus a fair bit of camping kit that might come in handy: sleeping bags; stoves; bungees; a rubber mallet for bouncing on potential looters to keep their thieving hands off our stores. As for flooding, Hackney is only 50ft above sea level but, even so, we should be OK ... If you live lower down that, though, you might want to invest in a canoe. And a paddle. Given that it doesn’t do to be up shit creek without one.

On the subject of looters, home invaders, bad actors, greedy hipsters, call them what you will, my thoughts are turning to how best to protect the Crampton homestead.

You may remember, in my eulogy earlier this year to my eccentric friend Stephen, I told the story of how he was convinced there is a disused 18th-century tunnel beneath our garden, a tunnel that he thought may contain Nazi gold, and how he tried to persuade me to hire a ground-penetrating radar to find the stash and dig it up? Well, I didn’t take much persuading, but Nicola nixed the plan, partly because it would have cost £500, partly because it would have ruined the garden, mostly because, amazingly, she didn’t believe Hermann Goering had hidden any stolen precious metal in east London.

But the thing is, given that the Nazi gold angle felt like a stretch, in the general hilarity over that, the existence of the tunnel was forgotten. Maybe it is there, after all? It’d make a perfect escape route/secret lair for the family, in extremis, don’t you reckon? I’m not talking about a panic room; they’ve always seemed way too passive, panic rooms. Sit there while some lowlife trashes your property? No thanks. What I need is a hideout from which I can then emerge, Jason Statham-like, to bump off any intruders one by one in a gruesome yet righteous fashion.

Actually, maybe the model isn’t Statham, splendid role model (and hugely versatile actor) as he is, but more Macaulay Culkin in *Home Alone*, all jury-rigged seesaws, killer Christmas baubles, falling bags of cement and viciously swinging cans of paint. Yep, I must get Nicola on to engineering these and other defence measures post haste. ■

robert.crampton@thetimes.co.uk

© Times Media Limited, 2026. Published and licensed by Times Media Limited, 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF (020 7782 5000). Printed by Walstead Bicester Ltd, Oxfordshire. Not to be sold separately.

TIMES Travel Partner

17 DAYS NOW FROM
£7,776
per person

SAVE UP TO 15%*
BOOK BY SEP 30

Peru, Ecuador & the Galápagos Islands Cruise

April 2027 to November 2028

Machu Picchu, Peru

Breathtaking world wonders, the treasures of the Incas and some of the planets most unusual creatures await on this unforgettable tour and cruise combination.

Unearth the lost cities of the Incas, soak up exquisite natural landscapes and follow the legendary voyage of Charles Darwin's HMS Beagle with an unforgettable 17-day tour and cruise holiday. Beginning your South American adventure with a visit to Peru's Sacred Valley, where the Inca civilisation once thrived, and the magnificent 'lost city' of Machu Picchu. You'll also explore Cusco, home to a unique blend of Inca architecture and colonial style, and Peru's cosmopolitan capital, Lima, before flying to lofty Quito, where you can explore the Ecuadorean capital in its spectacular Andean setting.

Next is an internal flight to Baltra where you'll be greeted by the friendly, experienced crew of MV Galápagos Legend, your home for the next four nights. As the ship charts an expertly crafted route, showcasing the very best of the remote Galápagos Islands, you'll have access to some of the lesser visited islands and panoramic views of the unique landscapes. With two fascinating excursions each day, explore the islands of Santa Cruz, Santiago, Isabela, Fernandina and Rabida, with an experienced naturalist as your guide and embrace encounters with the extraordinary creatures.

MV Galápagos Legend

Blue Footed Boobies, Galápagos Islands

Price includes

- Return flights to Cusco and from Quito plus four internal flights
- Comfortable, air-conditioned coach travel and transfers throughout
- Four nights' half-board accommodation onboard the MV Galápagos Legend
- Ten nights' mixed-board accommodation, staying in the Sacred Valley (two nights), Aguas Calientes (one night), Cusco (two nights), Lima (two nights), and Quito (three nights), plus two nights onboard the aircraft
- Spot sea lions, marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies, and giant tortoises at the Galápagos Islands
- Guided tours of Lima, Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Quito
- Local taxes and applicable fees

*Save up to 15% applies to select tour bookings made by September 30, 2026 and cannot be applied retrospectively to bookings already confirmed. Offer applies to select tours only and cannot be combined with any other offer. Exclusions apply. Prices shown include discount. Single supplements apply. Prices correct at time of print. Subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time. These holidays are organised and operated by Newmarket Holidays Ltd, a company wholly independent of News UK. ABTOT 5509. ATOL protected 2325. ABTA V7812. Standard phone charges apply.

Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details.

CALL TODAY ON
0808 189 3676
thetimes.com/nh-galapagoscruise
QUOTE TIM

Our trusted partner

Newmarket HOLIDAYS

ABTOT Member 5509

ATOL 2325 PROTECTED

ABTA Travel with confidence

PATEK PHILIPPE
GENEVE

BEGIN YOUR OWN TRADITION

AN INVITATION TO THE PATEK PHILIPPE EXHIBITION

CHRONOGRAPH. PERPETUAL CALENDAR REF. 5270P

DAVID M ROBINSON REQUESTS THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY AT AN EXHIBITION OF THE 2026 PATEK PHILIPPE COLLECTION, IN THEIR SHOWROOM AT 32 - 33 JUBILEE PLACE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON.

MONDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER - SATURDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2026
TO ARRANGE A PRIVATE VIEWING, PLEASE CONTACT DAVID M ROBINSON AT LONDON@DMR.CO.UK OR 020 7538 2332.

DMR

DAVID·M·ROBINSON
JEWELLERY & WATCHES

CANARY WHARF, LONDON

DAVIDMROBINSON.CO.UK